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W. BURNS THOMSON, F.R.C.S.E., F.R.S.E.

MEDICAL MISSIONARY



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Affectionately Yours
W. B. Lewis Thomson

W. BURNS THOMSON

F.R.C.S.E., F.R.S.E.

REMINISCENCES
OF MEDICAL MISSIONARY WORK

WITH BIOGRAPHICAL CHAPTERS BY J. C. D.

AND PREFACE BY

JAMES L. MAXWELL, M.A., M.D.

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P R E F A C E

THIS volume has a double purpose. It is intended to keep in memory a remarkable man whose life and labours contributed to a fuller and truer view of what is implied in the words "preaching the Gospel." It is intended, further, to make good the hiatus which would otherwise exist in the story of the development of Medical Missions.

Burns Thomson was a Medical Missionary. He counted it his highest earthly honour to be able in all public documents to put the words "Medical Missionary" after his name. To him the title was full of holy meaning. It was nothing less than the modern expression of the missionary method of our Lord and His Apostles. And his glorying in the name was the glorying of a man who had proved in his own experience that the Lord approves to-day the method according to which He Himself, while on earth, delighted to present the message of Eternal Life.

It is difficult to many among us to appreciate such an exalted view of the Medical Missionary calling. Where, as in this country, Christianity affects all the outward conditions of life, and the medical profession as well as all other professions, the missionary aspect which should attach to all true medical life and work is largely hidden. Both doctor and patients are nominally Christian, and this nominal Christian standing excludes the missionary idea. This will not, of course, blind the true and loyal Christian doctor to his duty and privilege; and there are many, thank God, in this country who in their daily rounds are ever remembering that the end of physical healing is the beginning of Gospel opportunity. But it is only in work among the very poor that to the Christian community the Medical Missionary idea reaches some degree of visibility. And the amazing coldness with which the Church still regards such work among the poor is proof enough how much, even in this country, the conception of "preaching the Gospel" requires to be widened.

Out in heathendom, and among Mohammedans, and largely also among the Jews, there is no difficulty in realizing why our Lord chose to link the healing of body and soul so closely together. Not

only are the physical sorrows of the heathen an awful entity on which the Church looks too much with the eye of the priest and Levite who passed by on the other side, but they are the lower field on which God still loves to demonstrate by His servants the power and the love which are to illuminate and enforce the spiritual message. That Medical Missions are increasing, and are bound to increase, is one of the accepted truths of all who are alive to the condition of the unevangelised world.

Among the men of this era of missionary revival, God chose Burns Thomson as the instrument by whom He would communicate to the Church the Medical Missionary impulse. Already the way had been in measure prepared. Asahel Grant and Parker and Hobson and Lockhart had in various quarters of the globe illustrated the power of the Medical Missionary. The Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society had been formed, and men like Drs. Coldstream and Handyside had, in the midst of busy professional careers, urged with voice and pen the cause of Medical Missions. The growth in the Church of missionary zeal and enterprise was also steadily forcing forward the more earnest consideration of the methods most suitable to the accomplishment of the world-wide purpose of the

Gospel. But the man was yet lacking who should lift Medical Missions into the view of the Christian community, and give them the impulse needed for their permanent recognition and acceptance. It fell to Burns Thomson to do this.

A man of noble powers, he was laid hold of and consecrated to and by the one idea. He had special qualifications which fitted him for his peculiar work. One was his profound sympathy with suffering. He was like his Master in this. He knew more than most the burden of physical weakness and pain. When he began his Medical Missionary career in the Cowgate of Edinburgh, men wondered that he should attempt it. And all through life he had the seal of suffering upon him. But if he knew how to sympathise with bodily afflictions, his deepest sighs and hottest tears were for men and women living without God. He felt as few did their unutterable loss, and longed that their eyes might be opened to the love of Christ.

Again, he was a man of holy insight into God's purpose, and of great faith concerning its accomplishment. From his wretched surroundings in the Cowgate he looked out with eager eyes on the whole heathen world. He recognised the immense possibilities of Medical Missions, he was on the

watch for every opening which his Master might present to forward them, and with singular simplicity and courage of faith he pressed earnestly towards the occupation of every indicated field. The largeness of his expectations and his zeal for progress put him not unfrequently out of touch with those whose support he earnestly coveted, but who lacked his faith. This indeed was one of the severest trials of his life.

His singleness of purpose made way, as in so many of God's heroes, for a self-abnegation that gave the larger play to an indomitable but sanctified will. With rare tenacity he grappled for Christ's sake with the ever-new difficulties that faced him in his varied schemes for the promotion of Medical Missions. And so it was that in the darkest haunts of the Cowgate of Edinburgh he was enabled in living service to illustrate, for the first time in this country, the spiritual power and opportunity of the Medical Missionary, and to show the applicability of such work in every direction where sin and suffering abound. In the hearts of the students who in successive circles surrounded him he had the joy of implanting a conception of the greatness of the Medical Missionary career, which to this day is bearing fruit in many lands; and by the living

voice and by his pen he so commended Medical Missions to the Church of Christ that they have come to be frankly accepted by all its branches as a ministry essential alike to the full display of the purpose and to the more rapid spread of the Gospel.

For five-and-thirty years after his own entry upon service Burns Thomson had the privilege of watching the development of Medical Missions. Abroad in every direction, and in not a few of the great cities at home, he had the joy of seeing how the Lord prospered them; and though latterly he himself had retired from active co-operation, those who had the privilege of his closer friendship knew how to the end his loving sympathy and prayers were with all, both men and women, who wrought in the double ministry of healing. "I can say truthfully," he wrote in one of his later years, "to all Medical Missionaries at home and abroad, that I remember all of you daily in my prayers, and I watch with paternal interest the development in your hands of our blessed cause." And in the same letter he gives, in a few words, his final thoughts on the great end to be sought by all Medical Missionaries: "Living as I now do on the confines of eternity, you will not be surprised to learn that the

spiritual aspect of our work grows in importance in my eyes. Could I, with my present views and feelings, begin again my missionary career, with what untiring, patient pitifulness would I plead with the sick and suffering to be reconciled to God. Brethren and sisters, your soul-winning opportunities are simply marvellous, but your responsibilities are correspondingly great. My heart's desire and prayer for you is that you may be daily kept in living companionship with your risen Lord, that you may imbibe from Him that spirit of self-sacrificing love that led Him in quest of sinners from the Father's bosom to a life of sorrow and a death of shame."

The work of the beloved friend of Dr. Thomson, to whom he himself looked for the revision and correction of the chapters he had written, and who kindly undertook the preparation of this volume, has not been so easy as at first sight might appear. The doctor's own "Reminiscences" are of necessity the substantially important part of the book, but they touch on so many points that it has been difficult in the first chapter, and in those which succeed the "Reminiscences," to avoid undesirable repetitions. The best has been done, we believe, that could be done to give the work completeness; and it is sent

forth in the hope that it may prove not only a solid contribution to the history of the rise of Medical Missions to their present place in the Church, but be used also of God to attract many hearts to the unspeakably precious service to which Burns Thomson's life was devoted.

JAMES L. MAXWELL.

49, Highbury Park, N.

January, 1895.

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This Mother's Legacy

*Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell
in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.*

*Delight thyself also in the LORD; and He shall give
thee the desires of thine heart.*

*Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in Him;
and He shall bring it to pass.*

*And He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light,
and thy judgment as the noonday.*

Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him.

—Ps. xxxvii. 3-7.

EARLY LIFE AND STUDENT DAYS

WILLIAM BURNS THOMSON was born in the year 1821 at Kirriemuir, in Forfarshire. His parents were godly people, and from his earliest years he was the child of many prayers. He used to say, "My mother left me as a legacy, Psalm xxxvii. 3-7 : Trust in, Delight in, Commit to, and Rest in the Lord."

To a patient, when striving on one occasion to impress on him the importance of prayer for his children, he said : "I was a very little laddie when my mother died ; she was not rich, and could not lay up money for me, but she made me rich through her prayers. She prayed to the Lord to take care of me, and to give me everything that I needed and what He thought best. Many of the things she asked the Lord for would have been of no use to me at the time she asked them, and so the Lord just took those things and stored them up, and every day of my life since then He has been taking them out of His storehouse, and giving them to me just as I needed them."

His father, an upright, honourable Christian man, was at one time in comfortable circumstances as a

merchant. He suffered very severe reverses, however, through misplaced generosity, and death claimed him before he was able to retrieve his position, and make some provision for his family.

His wife did not long survive him, and at her death William went to live with his elder and only brother, who was at that time schoolmaster at Golspie, in Sutherlandshire. Here he was educated, developing, as years increased, a character full of activity and energy, and having a reputation for all-round cleverness. Here also, when about seventeen, he decided for Christ, and gave himself to serve the Lord with his whole heart. A vivid reminiscence of those days, by the one who was his companion on the occasion, is of a scene behind a hedge at Golspie, when the two lads knelt and dedicated themselves to Christ and to any service to which He might call them.

He used to tell of his first experience in Sabbath-school teaching in order to encourage other young teachers not to despise the day of small things. He undertook, soon after his conversion, to hold a class at some little distance on Sabbath afternoons. Being rather discouraged to find that this class consisted only of three small children, he would say to his sister, "What is the use, Susie, of going all that way to teach three bit bairnies?"

"Willie," she would answer, "persevere; if you should win one soul for Jesus, would it not be grand?"

He did persevere, and after some time one of the three little ones took ill and died, giving sure testimony of having found salvation in Jesus at Willie's Sabbath class. Others heard of this child's happy death, and the class of three grew into a Sunday school, till before he left the neighbourhood it numbered 200 scholars.

When only twenty his brother left him, for a time, in sole charge of the school at Golspie ; and it is told of him that not only was he a successful teacher, but that at least one of the boys traced his conversion to his young master, and afterwards entered the ministry.

A little incident which happened during this period shows his indomitable energy and determination to overcome difficulties. He discovered that one of his pupils knew more of geometry than himself. Only saying to the lad, "I think we'll go over the ground-work again," he sent to Edinburgh for more advanced books, and praying as he studied, and often when he should have been asleep, he mastered the further parts, so as to keep ahead of his pupil.

When he left Golspie he became, for a time, an evangelist in the Lowlands. This must have been congenial work, for, as his friend the Rev. John Fordyce, late of Simla, truly says, "*The ruling passion of Thomson's life was to win souls to Christ.*"

He came to Edinburgh in 1847 to begin his college career, intending, by taking private teaching, to eke out the little store he had laid aside to meet his

expenses. His first experiences were trying and very disappointing. He knew no one, and no one knew him. He sought for teaching, but without success ; and when, in later years, he referred to this time, he would say, in his own quaint way, " I had not the conceit to tell them I could teach well, but I could, because I loved it." A friend who knew his power said, " Thomson, why don't you tell them you are the best teacher in Scotland ? "

About this time he lodged with a Christian woman in Castle Street. She was prepossessed in his favour, and being sorry for the lonely, struggling youth, she trusted him, although no teaching had yet turned up. Matters, however, grew very serious, and after some weeks, and when he was feeling terribly disheartened and dismayed (the college fees having swallowed up all his little savings), his good landlady came to him one evening in tears. Her rent was due, and she could go on no longer without the money he owed her, which amounted to £8. He spent that night crying to the Lord on his knees. In the morning a letter was brought to him. On opening it he found £8, the exact sum he required ; but to the day of his death he never knew whose heart God had prompted to send him this money.

This is only one instance out of many similar answers to prayer which his Heavenly Father granted him.

His friend and fellow-student, Mr. Fordyce writes :—

"I think it was in 1847 that Mr. Thomson came to Edinburgh to study for the ministry. A happy acquaintance grew into a very intimate friendship, that helped us both to understand the Bible words, 'Loved him as his own soul.' It lasted more than forty-five years, till his translation from Bournemouth, and it is not ended yet. The cords of Christian love are elastic, as well as strong and tender. They stretch from earth to heaven.

"He often explained our friendship to strangers by saying that we had been together in prison!

"This needed explanation, and it needs it now! We were missionaries together in the Calton jail. We did the work of assistant chaplains, visiting from cell to cell during the week, and each of us preaching twice on the Lord's day. In these old times there were twice as many prisoners as there are now, so there was plenty of work for us, as well as for the chaplain, the late Rev. George Hislop. Memories of this time come trooping up, fitter for a volume rather than a page. I can only say here that many of the cases of abounding sin were unspeakably sad, and some of superabounding grace were very precious. My dear brother's clear views of Divine truth, intense earnestness, and practical good sense eminently qualified him for this difficult work.

"While we laboured in the Calton jail I was requested by two estimable Christian ladies, the Misses Menzies, who had a boarding-school in Park Place,

Edinburgh, to give the young ladies, their pupils, an hour weekly of Christian instruction. I was unable to do it owing to other engagements, so recommended my friend. God owned him there in such a way as to cause thanksgiving to this day in earth and heaven. There was a remarkable awakening, and real conversions among boarders and day pupils.

“One evening I received an urgent request to go and conduct worship. Hearts were so tender that I had to be very cautious to prevent excitement. All had to be quiet and gentle. When praying, the sobbing of those whose hearts were breaking or broken was heard. Probably some who were in that drawing-room may read these lines. I have been in the midst of revival scenes from the days of McCheyne to those of Moody and Sankey. These were public. This was a wonderful private revival, but very deep and real. It could not be published at the time. More than forty years have elapsed since then, and the story may be suggestive to parents and teachers, and may stimulate faith and prayer, effort and hope.”

This class was a wonderful joy and solace to Dr. Burns Thomson. He used to say, “Was it not gracious of God to give me a sight once a week of these dear, bright, girlish faces, with their pure, clear eyes, to help me in my sad, painful work in the prison?”

Mr. Fordyce goes on to speak of Dr. Thomson as

“A MAN OF PRAYER,”

and to tell of an "agreement" made between them for prayer in their student days.

"To Burns Thomson prayer was a real dealing with the Triune—the Holy Spirit helping, the Son interceding, and the Father hearing and answering. 'Weak in self, but strong in prayer,' was the lesson he learnt when he read of Jacob becoming Israel. He expected answers, and many came to him, and not to him alone.

"I am indebted to him, under God, in this connection more than to any other man, and more to him in this respect than in any other. He spoke frequently of our agreement for prayer and the results, and reference has been made to it in at least one periodical.

"I have been repeatedly requested to give some account of it, which I would gladly do if it was only about my friend, but I do feel a difficulty in telling of what was mutual and private.

"We never thought there was any merit in our prayers; we simply believed a wonderful sentence that fell from the lips of Jesus, and acted upon it. Here it is: '*I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven*' (Matt. xviii. 19).

"When much together as students we agreed on special petitions, and the Lord encouraged us by giving answers so early and so definite as could only have come from Himself, so that no room was left

for the shadow of a doubt that God is the Hearer and Answerer of prayer. Once the answer came the same day, and at another time whilst we were still speaking.

“Times of separation followed, but we resumed our agreements by cards, with petitions suggested by each under his initials. These were now and then altered as occasion arose, and answers were recorded with thanksgiving. At such times we have been filled with awe and glowing gratitude. One of these occasions was a few days before our friend was called away to the world of praise, and our last meeting was one of thanksgiving for a recent answer to prayer.

“My friend often spoke of our agreement to the glory of Him who fulfilled to us His promise, and I refer to it to encourage others. Personally we often ask amiss, but this promise seems to imply that if two believers agree they will be careful to avoid presumption, and to ask for the Spirit’s guidance.

“One suggestive incident which occurred more than forty years ago, often spoken of by my friend, greatly encouraged us both. We were much distressed about a matter not personal to ourselves, but involving the interests of precious souls. We entered a room together, shut the door, and locked it. While engaged in prayer a delicious assurance came to us both, and though we had no express promise to plead, we left our ‘Peniel’ perfectly relieved. Humanly speaking, there was no probability—apparently no possibility—

of our desire being fulfilled ; but our doubts and fears were gone, for the case had been laid before the Lord as one about which two agreed, and the answer came in a few days in a very unexpected way. It might have been all the same without our poor prayers, but the memory of the assurance granted to these prayers is very precious."

For fully four years, while prosecuting his medical studies, Mr. Thomson continued assistant chaplain in the Edinburgh prison, and during that period he had personal dealing with 30,000 souls, and came in contact daily with strange and terribly sad stories. Here is one of them in his own words.

"I was leaving Calton jail one afternoon, when the Governor, stepping from a group of officials, said to me, 'Please wait ; we are expecting a heavy sentence.' In a short time the gates were opened, and the police van came in. When the clatter of bolts and bars had ceased, one prisoner stepped out of the van.

"After glancing for a moment at the papers given him by the policeman in charge, the Governor turned and whispered to me the one word 'Death.' I was so overcome that I waited to recover myself in the Governor's office, while the sad procession moved away, then followed to see if I could be of any use to the condemned man.

"He looked earnestly at me when the warder had left us alone in the cell, and said abruptly, 'So you don't know me, sir.' I replied that I could not recall having seen him before. 'But I remember you,' he

said, so bitterly that I wondered for a moment, could I possibly have done this man any injury. Then he broke into a paroxysm of grief, wringing his hands, and crying, 'Oh, if only I had kept my promise ; if I had just kept my promise, I would not be here to-day !'

"The prisoner was a sailor, a genuine British tar. He was short, firmly knit, and the picture of physical strength. He had a fine, open face, and, startling though it may seem, he had a kind and generous heart. But, alas ! as the fiery, alcoholic spirit went in, the kindly, generous spirit went out, and he became very quarrelsome. He was charged with murdering his wife. He never denied that he gave her the push at the top of the stairs, down which she fell, thus meeting her death ; but he persistently denied that he had any intention of killing her.

"He told me that three years previous to this time he had been thirty days in prison for a drunken row. He had attended all the meetings held by me in the class-room during these thirty days, and on the morning he was going out I had taken him into my little room and warned him very earnestly against drink. Then he went on : 'I promised you most faithfully that I would give it up ; and so I did for a while, but it came back on me. Since then I have been all round the world, and to think that I am here, and that it has come to this !' Then followed another outburst of the greatest agony, and the plaintive wail, 'Oh, if I had kept my promise !'

“As the prisoner belonged to the Church of England, the Rev. Mr. Ferguson, of St. James’s Church, was appointed to minister to him, a man of earnest piety, with whom it was a pleasure to co-operate in trying to lead this poor condemned one to the Saviour of sinners.

“The prisoner was very ignorant, not even knowing his letters, but thoroughly in earnest, and as docile as a child. Now at last he realized that only one thing was needful : the salvation of his soul.

“Mr. Ferguson and I agreed not to confuse his mind with too much, but to try and lodge in his heart one or two fundamental truths. The first of these was *Substitution*, Christ for us, ‘the Just for the unjust.’ This glorious truth we illustrated to him in every way likely to prove simple and impressive, and there was much prayer for the Divine Spirit’s blessing, without whose teaching all our labour would have been in vain. The public made an effort to get a reprieve for this man, and a respite of two weeks was granted. We feared that with the hope of deliverance before him he might become less in earnest ; but no, the Spirit was working, and the light breaking in on his darkened understanding. Now there was real shame and sorrow for sin, and he could use David’s words, ‘Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned.’ I had such good reason to believe that he had given his heart to Christ that when Mr. Ferguson proposed, the day before the execution, to administer the Sacrament, I gladly took my place beside the male-

factor, and partook of the Holy Communion with him.

“As he requested, poor fellow, I spent the last night with him, and found him in terrible agitation, realizing the nearness of the dreaded end, and moaning, ‘Oh, that I had kept my promise!’ Prayer alone soothed him, and he went himself direct to the throne of grace most earnestly. I sat on his bed beside him while he talked; and he told me about his life, which was an uneventful one. When sober, he had been a quiet, obliging man, evidently well liked by his fellows; but when he came to drunken outbreaks he invariably stopped and groaned, ‘Oh, that I had kept my promise!’

“After midnight the stillness was painfully broken by sounds of preparation that made poor W. turn pale; but by-and-by sorrow overpowered him, and he fell asleep for a few minutes. Then waking with a start and noticing the black clothes he wore, he made this curious remark to himself, ‘Oh, William, William, did I ever expect to see you in mourning for yourself?’ When I left him he thanked me warmly for my kindness, and again, with such depths of anguish that wrung my heart, cried, ‘Oh, that I had kept my promise!’”

One more incident, showing Dr. Burns Thomson’s understanding and wonderfully tender influence for good among prisoners, is told by Dr. Valentine.

“I was for a time visiting in Calton jail, and came across the case of a young girl which was unusually

sad and difficult. She was about nineteen or twenty, good looking and well educated. While at school she had become acquainted with companions who led her astray, and one thing leading to another, she went from bad to worse, until she landed in prison. She was not daunted by her position, but continued haughty and scornful, resisting every attempt to bring her to a better state of mind. I mentioned the case to Thomson, knowing he had at one time been assistant chaplain there, and he came with me one day.

“When we entered the girl’s cell she looked at us with the greatest scorn and defiance, as much as to say, ‘What right have you to come and trouble me?’ He made a few general remarks, then putting his hand, in his own peculiarly kind way, on her shoulder, he said, ‘And what did they blame you for?’

“The tender manner and the utterly unexpected question took her by surprise, and she burst into a flood of tears, the first she had been known to shed since she came into prison. In a few sentences she told her sad story.

“The next questions were, ‘How long was she in for?’ and ‘What punishment had she to undergo?’ She stated the time, and that she was compelled to perform a certain number of revolutions of the crank (that useless instrument being still in use as a form of punishment).

“Thomson remarked, ‘Oh, dear me, that is very

sad. Do you know there is no use in it? It does no good either to you or any one else. Round and round the weary crank goes. It is just like the devil's service all through : a lot of hard, useless work.' Then he pointed her to the Lord Jesus Christ, whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light. The poor girl was greatly affected, and promised, in the Lord's strength, to lead a new life when the term of her imprisonment expired."

"An incident of later date," says Mr. Fordyce, "shows that the confidence and gratitude of the people were won by Burns Thomson in a remarkable degree. I was told by one of his lady helpers that, in visiting, she met a woman who had just had a toe amputated. The lady said, 'Was it very painful?' 'Oh, no,' the woman replied, 'he did it himself'! May not this remind us, in times of trial, of Hezekiah's words, 'Himself hath done it'?"

He was an earnest student and devoted scholar, and during his college career he won many prizes. But the prolonged strain of self-support in the form of teaching, and his arduous prison duties, combined with close study, terminated, in 1856, in a severe breakdown in health.

This necessitated a long and complete rest; and thus did God "set him apart" in "His school of suffering," that He might Himself prepare His servant for the blessed work before him.

The trial of such discipline to his active, energetic spirit must have appeared strangely mysterious. In

his own eyes he was ready, fully equipped, and longing to be at work for his Master. Yet God laid His restraining hand upon him in tender love and far-seeing wisdom. And, doubtless, during some three years of inactivity, His Heavenly Father trained and instructed him in ways no college course could teach for the difficult and delicate service to which he so fully consecrated his life and in which the Lord so manifestly honoured and blessed him.

Before closing this chapter we must add a few sentences from the pen of his life-long friend the Rev. R. S. Macaulay, of the Free Church, Irvine. They give us some precious glimpses of the varied powers coupled with great tenderness of heart which characterized Burns Thomson.

“It was towards the end of October, 1847, that we were brought closely and personally together, when we lodged in the same house in Edinburgh, attended the same classes in college, waited on the same ministry, and taught in the same Sabbath school.

“In teaching I was unskilled. One Sabbath evening my class sent me home broken-hearted, determined to give up the work altogether. Next Sabbath he kindly took the class, and I sat listening, and looking, and learning. His subject was the story of David and Goliath. He used the palm of his hand to represent the battle-ground. So graphic and telling was his description that the boys were kept spellbound, and the effect on me was that I never failed again in enlisting the attention and interest of

a class. It was a model lesson for all my future. In my first attempt at essay-writing he aided and encouraged me. Without his sympathy, I believe I would have given up student work in despair. But he never failed me, and I confided in him and clung to him. He took me with him when he did mission work. On the occasion which was decisive of his giving himself to the study of medicine, to become a medical missionary, I was with him visiting in Ponton Street, and remember well the scene, which he himself afterwards so vividly described by tongue and pen. Dr. Thomson's life was rooted and embedded in prayer. Often he would say, 'Robert, I wish a wee while for prayer.' He asked and he received. If he were questioned as to how sums of money were obtained, and objects accomplished on which his heart was set, the simple explanation would be, 'I asked.' Were I to specify instances of such answers either for himself or for me, many would say, 'Incredible, impossible.' Nevertheless, the day shall declare it.

"His power of addressing people was most telling. A visit from him was looked forward to with expectation by my people ; it was always remembered with gratitude. Time has not effaced impressions made by his inimitable addresses on David's kindness to Mephibosheth, or on the twenty-third Psalm, etc., etc.

"For many summers our holidays were spent together in Arran. Often had I the pleasure at the beginning of them, when his strength indeed was

weak, of carrying him in my arms over the rough stones from the boat in which he landed to the soft green sward. Arran furnished a field fitted to gratify his passion for natural history. The Holy Loch we dredged from one end to the other, and the creatures brought from the deeps delighted him. The shore we searched for rocks, and shells, and seaweeds. Through its ravines, and over its hills, we wandered in quest of butterflies, and moths, and adders, mosses, and ferns, and wild flowers.

“But most refreshing at the time, and most memorable since, were our ‘wee whiles,’ lying on some quiet spot on the hillside, or floating in the boat far out in the sea, studying the precious works of God or pouring out our hearts unrestrainedly in prayer, always encouraged by what was his favourite text, Matthew vii. 7.

“In connection with Arran, I cannot refrain from relating an incident which took place early the summer before our first visit, and which made a deep and abiding impression on me. He had my arm walking along Princes Street. After telling me that you [written to Mrs. Thomson.—ED.] and he were going to Arran for some weeks, he said, ‘And you must come, too.’ Knowing my circumstances, I replied, ‘Ah! however desirable, *that* is impossible.’ Though there were people passing this way and that, he stood with firm grasp of my arm, and said, ‘Robert, He spared not His own Son. Anything after that.’ Had my tears of gratitude been coloured, I should

have used them instead of ink in writing this brief, unworthy remembrance of one to whom, under God, I owe much of what I am, and of what I have been enabled to do for the loving Lord and Master in whose presence he now rejoices."

The following chapters, only written during the last five months of his life, and at the urgent request of friends, contain, in his quaint and pithy language, an account of the way by which, from step to step, God led him, first to become a medical missionary, and then through those busy and eventful years on which the modern history of medical missions has so largely turned. Very few of the young men and women who are now setting their faces to the medical mission field are acquainted with the story of those years, but they ought to know it. Without these reminiscences, there would be a large and unintelligible gap in the history of the development of medical missions. Burns Thomson indeed was the last man to seek a name for himself, and it is befitting the man that the only record of him will be limited, almost wholly, to these pages, in which are told so much of the rise and growth of the modern medical mission movement.

REMINISCENCES

CHAPTER I

"HOW I CAME TO BE A MEDICAL MISSIONARY"

I CAME to Edinburgh to prepare for the holy ministry, intending, when my studies were finished, to go as a missionary to China. At the close of my Arts course, and when my thoughts were fully directed towards the Theological Hall, I was visiting in Ponton Street, when an incident occurred which changed the whole current of my life.

I went into one of the lowest houses about twelve o'clock in the forenoon to invite the inmates to a prayer-meeting that was to be held on the following Sabbath evening. I had scarcely got into the house when a sharp little Irishwoman came springing into the middle of the floor, and, approaching me, abruptly said, "What do you want, sir?" I was not so experienced then in visiting as I am now, and the question disturbed me. Although it was only twelve o'clock, her son was lying on a low settle at the side of the room the worse for drink. He looked up at

me, and, evidently not liking my appearance, he cried to his mother, "Pet 'im oot, mither." As I lingered about the room, not knowing very well what to do, the youth got angry and cried, with an oath, "Mither, canna ye pet 'im oot?" This disturbed me still more, and I remarked to the woman, "I was just going round your district, and I thought I would look in and see you. You are not looking well." The thought seemed to flash upon her that perhaps I was a medical man, and in an instant her manner changed, and she answered quite kindly, "Sure, and it's not well that I am, sir." "I think you would be the better of a little medicine," said I. She was entirely of the same mind. Why I was led to make such a remark I cannot conceive, for I knew absolutely nothing of medicine, and the thought of becoming a doctor had never entered my wildest dreams. The efficacy of one drug, however, I had satisfactorily learned in my youth, and, getting a cup from her—it had no handle, I remember—away I went to the nearest druggist and got a dose of castor-oil. I brought it back and presented it to the poor woman, and she received it amidst many expressions of gratitude. On the Monday following, as in duty bound, I called back to see my patient. She received me with open arms, and actually came out with me to the end of the street with my hand in hers. She made the sign of the cross on her forehead, and struck a covenant of eternal friendship between us. I got access to that house ever after, and was freely

permitted to tell of the great salvation offered by Christ.

My purpose, as already mentioned, being to go abroad as a missionary, the thought dawned upon me that the study of medicine might be as useful to me as a course of theology, for I knew already the plan of salvation. At this juncture I turned to the Word of God, to see if there were indications in it that might help to guide me in determining my path of duty.

I was amazed to find medical missions on almost every page of the Gospels, and strong confirmation of them in the Epistles.

When the Saviour of mankind appeared amongst us, and desired to bring the full idea of His Gospel before suffering humanity, He did not preach alone, nor heal alone, but He preached and healed. He dealt with man's body, and He dealt with man's soul. He gave instruction to the spirit; He gave health and vigour to the physical frame. He showed by His mode of procedure that He fully intended, and was fully prepared, to relieve man from the curse under which he suffered, both spiritually and physically, and that the provisions of His grace were commensurate with the necessities of man. Whenever and wherever the great Healer comes face to face with sickness, the harbinger of death, it flees from before Him. Whether it be a derangement in the organism itself, or malignant spirits affecting it injuriously, they cannot remain in His presence. Even

though death itself may lay its cold hand on man, and exact its claim—yea, even though corruption may have entered on the duties of dissolution—the vital spark returns at once in the presence of Him who is the Life. Surely, these healings are a revelation of the heart of God, and, when translated into ordinary language, proclaim the blessed truth, “He is the Saviour of the body,” and seem to express in symbol the glorious utterance of the apostle, “Who shall change the body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His glory.”

The Saviour Himself not only went about healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease amongst the people, so that “it was never so seen in Israel,” but when He sent out the twelve on a probationary mission tour, He enjoined them to heal and teach.

When He sent out the seventy home missionaries, He gave them an express command, “Into whatsoever city ye enter, heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.” This is the medical missionary’s motto, “Heal the sick, and say unto them, The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.”

A further study of the Divine Word not only deepened in my mind the conviction that this is God’s way of missions, but I seemed to find traces of the domain within which this agency is to be exercised. The power of the apostles in healing the sick we know to have been very extraordinary, even

their shadow passing over these sufferers being sufficient to effect a cure, but it seemed to be mainly amongst the heathen. The great Apostle Paul, who was not a whit behind the chiefest of the apostles, was not able to cure Timothy. We infer this from the fact that he left him in his infirmity, and fell back on a very humble "recipe" : "Take a little wine for thy stomach's sake." Why not heal him right off? Why not send a "handkerchief" to him? Again we read, "Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick." Why cure the father of Publius, and leave his friend lying ill?

More striking still, Epaphroditus was sick, nigh unto death, and Paul's heart was breaking lest he should die, and he should have sorrow upon sorrow ; but he could not cure him, although his heart yearned over him. Why? Because that was not the sphere for medical missions. It was in the wide, outlying circle of heathenism. "Into whatsoever city ye enter, heal the sick." Such were some of the considerations that weighed with me and led me to study medicine ; and I cannot help thinking that a more careful study of the Divine Word would have led the Church long ago to the use of an agency so eminently fitted to open the way for the Gospel.

My introduction to the Medical Missionary Society was rather curious. The Society offered a prize for the best essay on Medical Missions, and I wrote for it. The prize was given to another, but the Rev. Dr. Guthrie, one of three ministerial adjudicators, pro-

nounced my paper "out of all sight the best," which so perplexed the Directors that both papers were circulated amongst the leading members of the Society, and I also got a prize.

By the advice of several influential members of the Society and others interested in the cause, I was induced to publish my paper, and it appeared in July, 1854, in the form of a ninepenny booklet. That was my first public effort on behalf of this blessed cause, and it is cheering to know that it was in some measure helpful in fostering the conviction that "*The medical mission is God's way of missions.*"

CHAPTER II

ENTRANCE ON SERVICE AT 39, COWGATE

IN November, 1853, a Mission Dispensary was opened at Main Point, West Port, Edinburgh, by Dr. P. D. Handyside.

The first Report sets forth the principle on which it was founded. "The Saviour when on earth manifested the tenderest pity for the afflicted ; but while He was ever ready to afford them bodily relief, He never failed at the same time to minister to their spiritual wants."

"He hath left us an example that we should follow in His steps."

The Dispensary was open daily, except on Sundays ; but at the outset it met with little acceptance, and during the four years it was carried on at Main Point, the total number of patients only amounted to 1,878.

At the very early stage in the history of medical missions of which I write, the cause was little known, and not a few were prejudiced against it, and withheld their sympathy and support.

In March, 1858, there being no funds to carry on

the work without incurring debt, the Dispensary at Main Point was closed.

That the good work, however, might not only be continued, but if possible expanded, additional members were secured for the committee, more commodious premises were sought, and happily soon found in a most central position at 39, Cowgate.

These were taken possession of at Whitsuntide, 1858. In June of the same year a circular was issued making an appeal for help, and a meeting also was held in the saloon of the Royal Hotel, Edinburgh, at which the claims of the Institution were laid before the public. The gathering itself yielded little, but good seed was sown.

A porter and his wife were appointed to care for the house at 39, Cowgate, and wait on Mr. Hunter, a medical student, who lived there, and looked after the work of the Dispensary.

In February, 1859, Mr. Hunter resigned, and the committee resolved to invite me to become resident superintendent. The state of their finances only enabled the committee to venture upon asking my services for one month, "trusting," they added, "that at the end of that time the collections now in progress would permit them to make more permanent and suitable arrangements." Serious illness prevented my acceptance of that offer. As my health improved during the course of the summer, I heard of a situation in the country ; but before making the closing arrangements, I went and offered my services

to the committee. They asked what remuneration I would expect, and my reply was that in the present state of the funds I was willing to work for food and clothing and the accommodation of the Dispensary. Nothing could be more encouraging, only they wished a definite sum specified. "One could scarcely do," I replied, "with less than £80 a year," to which they heartily agreed. Then they turned to other business. I interrupted them, saying, "Excuse me, gentlemen, but if we cannot come to some definite understanding now, I must accept a situation in the country for which I have applied." The answer was, "We hope you'll be guided," and so I left. This was in July.

There is no official record of the above, but the Secretary thus refers to it in a letter to a mutual friend: "I know not what the situation is that Mr. Burns Thomson has accepted that weighs in the balance with the Cowgate Institution, but am disposed to think it must kick the beam. I know that he is animated by the most conscientious motives. His self-denial really astounded me, and made me shrink within myself."

This is a delicate statement to make about myself, but it is done to bring out an important fact that these good men, some of them wealthy, and all of them desirous to have me connected with the Institution, would not face the slightest pecuniary responsibility to secure their object, although that object was connected with the most Christ-like form of Christian service man could be called to promote.

This state of mind was for me a source of continual difficulty throughout my whole connection with the Society.

Next morning Drs. Macqueen and Handyside came to express regret at the result of the meeting, and to renew their application for my services ; but it was too late. As they kept up correspondence, however, on the matter, I was induced early in October to give up my situation, with the view of accepting the Cowgate appointment.

The devoted Secretary wrote thus to Dr. Handyside : “ I rejoice greatly at our success, and now trust we can make the experiment of a superintendent. I was almost beginning to despair. This prospect must be a great satisfaction to you.”

After reading such language, one would suppose that when Dr. Macqueen led me before the Board on October 7th, the appointment would be settled. But no. Up again came timidity about finance, and the committee required more time for deliberation, etc. At the next meeting, 14th October, the matter was finally settled ; and on the 20th October, 1859, I took up my abode in the old dram shop as superintendent of the Cowgate Mission Dispensary.

CHAPTER III

NATURE AND CLAIMS OF MEDICAL MISSIONS

BEFORE inviting you to enter my new home, and to follow with me the development of this blessed agency, I must pause to say a few words on the nature and claims of medical missions.

No one is reckoned a medical missionary who is not legally qualified to practise medicine throughout Her Majesty's dominions, and unless he give his whole time to the work. Many physicians give a part of their time to kindly ministry among the poor, and many blend their medical labours with religious instruction. We fully appreciate all this, but that is their bye-work ; our ministrations form our life-work. We forego the emoluments and the professional advantages we might possess, that we may win souls to Jesus Christ. There are some who fancy that a medical mission is a mysterious indefinite compound of piety and physic. They say that surely it does not need so much devotion to be a medical missionary as to be an ordinary missionary, since what is wanting in piety may be made up for by a few extra pills or powders, and that we may be content with a little less professional skill, if it is atoned for

by a few touching prayers. These delusions have wrought mischief to the cause of medical missions. Suffice it to say that the ideal medical missionary must be *pre-eminent* both in piety and professional skill. If the latter is questionable, how can he expect to awaken and foster that gratitude on which his hopes of true success very much depend? And if his piety is at all questionable, he will not long resist the temptations that press upon him to leave the missionary element in abeyance, and ultimately turn aside from it altogether, as, alas! too many have done to our sorrow and shame.

This form of Christian agency may claim certain advantages. As a philanthropic agency it seems to me of all others the least liable to abuse.

One of the most delicate and perplexing questions of the present day is how to help the poor without injuring them. I have had a lengthened personal experience in the distribution of relief, and to this hour it is one of the most perplexing questions of my life. How shall I help the poor without degrading them? Well, we think, in this philanthropic aspect, the medical mission is less liable to abuse than most other forms. The simple healing of the body may almost be regarded as an unadulterated blessing. When either of the heads of a poor household is prostrated, it seems a truly beneficent thing to restore them to health and strength, and to carry them across the season of calamity. We know that when sickness enters a poor family, an extra expenditure is sure to

come in at its heels. The sooner, therefore, we can bring back health and strength, the sooner we remove the extra burden. That does not seem a kindness very liable to be abused. Remember also that all our kindness and medical adjuncts are administered in connection with sickness, and consequently under medical supervision ; that is, with care and discrimination. Perhaps some may imagine that as it is our aim to awaken gratitude and kindly feelings amongst the poor, so that amongst these sentiments we may sow the seed of truth, we shall be tempted to extravagance in our philanthropic distributions. But did you ever know a philanthropy managed on the principle of extravagance awaken gratitude? I never did. But I have known them awaken a very large amount of impudence and presumption ; and if anything occurred to interrupt the flow of kindness, the benedictions poured upon us were of a character we would gladly have dispensed with. Even our blessed Master, when with royal bountifulness He scattered broadcast His kindnesses, did not awaken gratitude. Perhaps one in ten said, " Thank you " ; but the great mass ran after the loaves and fishes, and deserted Himself. We strive so to administer our kindness as to keep in remembrance the principle that the fragments are to be cared for, so that nothing be lost ; and it is interesting to notice that to the extent to which we can bring our patients into sympathy with our economy, and our desire to be saving, the more they appreciate our kindness, and the more

they are thankful for it. Therefore medical missions may well claim the cordial support of the Christian community.

As an evangelistic agency it secures access to homes and hearts from which the ordinary missionary is excluded ; and when we have gained access, we stand on an entirely different platform from the ordinary missionary. We are not only tolerated, but welcomed as benefactors and friends. We could fill volumes with illustrations, but one or two must suffice.

A missionary went up a close or alley a little distance from our Dispensary in broad daylight. He had not been speaking many minutes when the women turned out and tore his coat off his back, and he was glad to escape with his life. In that close, during that week, amongst these same people, we had the opportunity of telling them of Jesus ; and the children of some of these folk were learning verses of Scripture out of the Douay Testament, to be repeated to us.

My nephew, then a medical student, now Dr. Crabbe, of the Birmingham Medical Mission, was visiting in this district one Sabbath between sermons. When going up one stair, the door opened, and a tract was flung out, and the door closed with a crash. He knocked. The man behind the door, when he opened, and saw who it was, said, "I beg your pardon, doctor ; I thought it was one of those tract-distributing bodies. Come in, come in ;" and in less than ten

minutes the visitor, after examining his patient, was sitting at the fireside, and reading out of the Scriptures, speaking to the man of his ungodliness, and pointing him to the Saviour.

A pious youth, a stranger to this district, was passing up the Cowgate, and seeing crowds of idle people hanging about, he thought it a good opportunity to proclaim God's truth. He had not spoken many minutes, before he was attacked and severely beaten by the excited crowd. One of the Dispensary students came on the scene, and taking him under his care soon quietly dispersed the mob.

Most gentlemen are aware that there is a deal of "hot water" about the house on washing days, beyond what is in the kettle! I very soon learned that *as an evangelist*. I can never forget the strange look with which I was greeted when I opened the door of a house to find the good woman up to the elbows in soap-suds. She never took her arms out of the tub, but turning round, she met me with a gaze of mingled despair, disgust, and indignation, as much as to say, "Can a body no wash a few bit duds but you must be poking in your ugly countenance?" I was glad to beat a hasty retreat. *As a doctor*, what a different greeting have I received! I have seen for an instant a flash of dismay cross the face, raised from the washtub, but only for an instant. Straightening herself, and coming forward with a cheerful welcome, as she stroked the suds off her hands and arms, the woman would say, "Ah!

it's you, doctor. Glad to see you ; ashamed to see you among these rags, but the doctor must take us as he finds us. I think Jeanie is a little better to-day."

Not only may we go to them, but they come to us. As a college student, I had charge of a mission district in Fountainbridge. I had a prayer-meeting during the week, but I never saw a young man present. Once in a while an old man might be coaxed in, of the type aimed at, and I would be quite uplifted about it. A few dear old women came, who knew the Gospel better than myself, not the kind we wanted. On the Sabbath there was an evangelistic service, and I would go round on Saturday to tell the people of it. I was obliged to go again to a large number on the Sabbath between sermons to give them a further reminder, and even on my way to the meeting I would call to take some of them with me. What a business to get an audience! *Now* the business was to keep numbers within bounds. My first day I had three patients. By the end of the year 1,300 had come into our little waiting-room, where a lady read the Bible to them, and where I daily gave an exposition of God's truth, followed by prayer. The second year the numbers rose to 3,000. The third to 5,000. This was about as many as could properly be attended to, and yet the numbers increased to 7,000.

People used to say that the Bible would keep many away, but it was not so. I made my addresses

specially pointed, and applicable to their hearts and consciences, and yet the numbers increased. At last I was unwillingly obliged to place a nurse at the door to send the surplus patients away, as we were quite unable to attend to more.

Who were those who thus crowded in? Just the very people I was never able to get to a prayer-meeting or district service. They came and sat at our feet, outcasts, infidels, and papists, and heard of salvation without money and without price. Some thousands of Roman Catholics passed through our hands yearly. They listened quietly to expositions of Scripture that told them of salvation by the Blood, without penance and without purgatory. Our labour amongst them was not in vain. Some of them, after the priest had done all he could for them, and when extreme unction had even been administered, have sent to the Dispensary for some one to tell them more about the Blood, the wondrous Blood that cleanseth from all sin.

The medical missionary's work is a grand work! He aims at something more than healing the body! There is something not merely blessed but positively sublime in moving about amid these dens of dirt and wickedness, letting in upon the dwining, sickly inmates the glorious sunshine of light and immortality, telling them they shall never die. "He that believeth on the Son shall never see death." If my Christian brethren in the profession knew one tithe of the joy we have in this precious service, and if

Christians knew one tithe of the blessed services thus rendered by medical missions amongst the sunken masses, we would never need to plead any more either for money or for men.

CHAPTER IV

HOW THE MISSION DISPENSARY BECAME A TRAINING INSTITUTION

MY first experience of 39, Cowgate, as a home, was far from pleasant. Indeed, the filth baffles description, as the house had never been cleaned since it was a den of revelry. Once a month, of a morning, the dust in my little sitting-room was disturbed, and by 3 p.m., when the committee met, you could write your name on the window panes. I must not refer to the cooking. Happily the cups were clean for breakfast and tea, but it was absolutely necessary to dine outside. Certainly I learned there that a missionary does not need to go to a foreign country in order to meet discomfort in the Master's service.

One difficulty arose in connection with the students. The Medical Missionary Society gave an annual grant for the benefit their students were supposed to derive from attending the Dispensary, and I confidently counted on their efficient help, now that I could give them the benefit of sixty new cases per week. But I was disappointed. The first four months I had every outdoor patient to attend myself,

with the exception of two cases which were under the care of Mr. Lowe and Mr. Miller. That the young men might be kept in sympathy with the spiritual aspect of the work, I arranged with ministers around for meetings, to be conducted by the students every fortnight. I hoped myself to be present at these meetings, to learn the capabilities of the young workers, and to give help and counsel if required. But, alas! almost all these meetings fell on my own shoulders, and during these first six months I conducted 226 services. That, with all the Dispensary work, was too much.

There was another depressing form of trial in the illness of one of the members of committee. He was the prominent member of committee in connection with this work, and his condition was such that matters settled one day were unsettled or overlooked the next. Even regulations drafted by himself and the committee to guide my procedure were treated as if they had no existence. The strain was too heavy, and I resolved to leave. One forenoon I had just lifted my hat to go and tender my resignation to the Secretary, when the bell rang fiercely: an urgent case. As it lay on my way, I went with the messenger. I was surprised to find my patient at the fireside, not in bed. On lifting her hand to examine the pulse, I found the skin perfectly cool. She noticed an expression of astonishment pass over my face, and, bursting into tears, she exclaimed, "Oh, doctor, it's not my body at all; it's my soul."

She had been to our prayer-meeting on Sabbath evening, and the Divine Spirit had spoken to her, and awakened in her a deep sense of guilt as a sinful creature before God. I found her in great agony, but in a few days she was enabled to look to Jesus as her substitute and surety, and she found rest to her soul. I need hardly add, I did not go to the Secretary. When God was pleased to throw inquiring souls in my path, I judged it safe to turn back. This encouraged me also to feel I could now count more confidently on His support and guidance in trial and perplexity, and hope for His blessing on the work when in this touching form He had arrested me in my flight.

My difficulties from the unsatisfactory attendance of the students increased. They lived where they pleased, did what they pleased, and could never be found when wanted. A brief experience showed the worthlessness of that arrangement. In imitation of the Master, who took His disciples into His own home, and *in* the work and *by* the work trained them for their life-work, I wished the students to live with me and be members of my family. This is the feature that distinguishes a Training Institution from a Dispensary. This subject was brought up before the committee definitely in October, 1860. I stated that the cause of irregularity in the attendance of the students arose in my opinion from the inadequacy of the means at the command of most of them to meet the necessary expenditure, without devoting

some hours daily to teaching, to supply the deficiency. I offered, if the committee would give their sanction, to take them into the Dispensary, and board them, on the understanding that they would give a definite portion of their time to the work of the Institution. Such service being in the line of their studies would tend to increase their efficiency as doctors, and so contribute to their future usefulness. To my disappointment, the committee did not see their way to aid me in this on financial grounds. They hesitatingly, however, gave me permission to collect personally for this object, only the sums must be over £5, lest the Dispensary collection should suffer.

The Lord took up the cause and sent help in His own way. When wrestling in prayer for guidance, He inclined my heart to lay my project before a friend who was thoroughly conversant with the working of the City Mission, and who, I knew, would be able to help me with his counsel. He entered warmly into the subject, saw at a glance the importance of the training and supervision of the men ; realized the necessity of testing them in view of the temptations that awaited them at the completion of their studies ; and to enable me to make a beginning of this *training* and *testing* school, he gave me a grant of £20. I came home singing very loudly in my heart, "Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men !" Thus was the Training Institution started. The change was so important

in the eyes of the committee that they resolved, in 1862, to alter the name of the Dispensary to that of *Medical Mission Dispensary and Training Institution*.

I now got a servant of my own, and the little nest was made clean and tidy. First, Messrs. Stewart and Valentine joined me, and not long after Mr. Andrew Davidson. When the machine was in full working order, I invited the editor of the *Free Church Monthly* to visit us, and, for the good of the cause, publish what he saw and heard. He did not say when he would call, but dropped in at his convenience, and his paper is so graphic I give it in full.

“Viewed from either of the lofty bridges which span it, the Cowgate of Edinburgh looks like a vast gloomy trench, with human swarms moving about on the bottom. Numerous closes open to the trench, almost low and dark enough to be the passages of a mine. We are going to spend a little time in one of these clammy, dingy closes. Up this close, so narrow that two persons cannot walk abreast, is the Medical Missionary Dispensary and Training Institution. The door by which we enter was once the back-door of the extinct whisky-shop whose premises the Dispensary occupies. Turning to the left, we are in a low room, poorly lighted by a window half sunk under the level of the back court.

“It is the hour for the patients gathering. They come dropping in one by one. A pale, toiled-looking

young mother, with a skinny, pining child at her bosom, slides softly into a corner. A heavy old woman in a faded shawl, with an expression of intense suffering in her brown wrinkled face, sits down beside the door. A lad with a hand wrapped up in a bloody clout follows. A tall, slim young man with a face of a consumptive, and dark eyes which almost glitter, takes his place near the window, and coughs for some minutes with his face down to his knees, a cough hard and dry like the sound of an axe chopping wood. More mothers and children come in. What an effort these poor drudges have made to appear decently! Look at the fit of their clothes. Some articles of dress are too big and some too small for the wearers. Evidently they have been fitted out, and their babies too, by the loan of this article from one neighbour, and that article from another neighbour, as the manner of the poor is. One woman has a blue eye—a brutal husband, his mark. And such poor, sallow, withered things as the babies are! If the American rate for black babies, ‘sucklings at a dollar per pound weight,’ applied to them, they would be had cheap.

“ Gradually the room fills with sufferers of every age, and under well-nigh every sort of ill. As the patients gather, a lady comes in, and sitting down among them, begins reading the Bible. She has that ‘excellent thing in woman,’ a voice exquisitely sweet, low, and musical. To many of these poor patients, the word of God is absolutely a new sound. The

lady reads some of the Lord's miracles of healing. Faces which had been turned to her with a dull stare, or with no expression save the heavy languor of sickness, give token of interest. Then she reads how a ruler of the Jews came to that Lord by night. Lastly, she reads the wondrous history of the death of Him who is the Friend of sinners.

"It is now two o'clock. A thin, work-worn man enters the room with an active, springy step, and his forefinger between the leaves of a Bible. It is Dr. Burns Thomson, the Superintendent of the Institution. He looks round on his crowd of patients with a kindly smile and an eye which beams with benevolence. Opening his Bible, he reads the words, 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have eternal life.' He describes the camp of Israel—the working of the fearful serpent-poison, the convulsed, shrieking wretches in the death agony, and all the horrors of the scene—and the picture he draws is so real that it makes the flesh creep. You, he said to his hearers, have a poison as deadly working in you; but I can tell you of a remedy. And so he preached unto them Christ. It was but a twenty minutes' sermon altogether, but so plain, so perfectly adapted to the class to whom it was spoken, and so winning in its gentleness and kindness, that we thought it the very model of what Kingsley calls a 'ragged sermon.'

"A short prayer follows the sermon, and then the

doctor retires to a separate room, where he seats himself with the students, several of whom are being trained for the work of medical missions. The patients are shown in one by one. The heavy old woman with the pain-stricken expression comes first. Her disease is a cancer, frightful to look upon. How eagerly she gazes into the doctor's face, trying to read some hope there! What can be done? Kind words and some appliances to assuage a little the fierce-darting pains; all the skill on earth can do no more. For two hours the doctor and his students are occupied receiving and dealing with the patients. How kindly and soothingly each one is spoken to; above all, how the kind doctor charms the babies out of their fear at the presence of so many strange men, and even draws feeble smiles from their wan faces. No wonder that the mothers' hearts are reached, and that when they come back with the little ones a day or two after to report progress, they listen willingly and gratefully to the doctor's discourse.

"A correct register is kept of the name, address, ailment, and treatment of every patient. All cases that require it are visited at the patient's dwelling, and this is a part of their work rich in precious opportunities. The necessary medicines are given at the Dispensary, and the medicines, like the advice, are all free. The number of patients verges on *seven thousand* for the year. During the past year the truth of God has been spoken to this large number of souls in the waiting-room of the Institution.

Many of them have heard it again and again. Numbers who, for fear of the priest, dare not be seen in any place of worship come merely to hear the word. Quite well in health, they slip into the waiting-room among the patients, hear the address, and quietly slip away again. Nor is evidence wanting of fruit brought forth. The very morning of our visit four of the home heathen made calls on the Superintendent asking after the way of peace.

“The good done, and the influence for good built up by an Institution such as this, working among the poor of a great city, is inestimable. But the good which it effects in Edinburgh is only one of its aims. Students are here trained for the work of medical missionaries in heathen lands. ‘One of our students,’ said the doctor, ‘is now on his way to Madagascar, another leaves this very night for Peking. Of eight students who were with me during the past year, all are gone abroad but one.’ The training of these young men is carefully adapted to the work they have in view. A medical missionary among the heathen must be able to put his hand to anything. This is exactly what the students in the Institution are accustomed to do. The shelving and other fittings up, the papering and painting, which turned the grimy rooms of the shabby tavern into these tidy apartments, are all the work of their hands. Their medical training is of the highest order. They are accustomed to address the assembled patients, for their foremost qualification must be the power of

presenting the Gospel to the ignorant in a clear, simple, and affectionate manner. If a man cannot do this in his own language to our home heathen, how can he do it abroad, when hampered by the difficulties of a foreign tongue! *No superintendent can train for the missionary field those whom God has not made missionaries, and on whose heart the Spirit has not written the commission, 'Say, Come.'* But if the right material exists among the students, the training which they receive in the Institution seems altogether adapted to equip them for their field. No. 39, Cowgate, is a mother institution. Every student sent out is a No. 39—in Pekin, Madagascar, Calcutta, Travancore, Rajpootana, and other great heathen centres."

CHAPTER V

METHOD OF TRAINING

TILL now the Medical Mission Dispensary had been in close connection with the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society, but was supported by separate funds. In November, 1861, they became one, the late Professor Miller taking the lead in urging this step.

One of the objects of the Institution was to do good among medical students generally. Its influence in this direction was greatly increased when "39" became the home of the young missionaries. As medical students, generally, were at liberty to take their dispensing practice at "39," not a few availed themselves of it, and so came under the influence of the place.

As a result of this influence there were some who cherished towards "39" the warmest gratitude, not only for professional benefits, but for spiritual good.

Here is a portion of a letter from a young doctor who had just got comfortably settled in practice in the country :—

"How my heart longs after '39'! How shall I tell what '39' has been to me! When I went there

I knew nothing of medicine ; when I left, had I failed to pick up, the responsibility was my own, since the opportunities for seeing and hearing were most ample, and the facilities for learning great. But there is another aspect of the Institution which stands out more distinctly in my memories of the past, and which was of the greatest good to me. From the first day to the last I was connected with ' 39 ' (nearly two years), it was ever my greatest pleasure to be within its precincts and in the society of its inmates. In it the slightest ripple of discontent never grated on my ear. The duties were arduous, often most harassing and perplexing, and drew forth many a weary sigh ; but, in harmony with the whole spirit of the place, they were carried on the wings of faith and prayer to the throne of grace. When difficulties came, they were met in firm dependence on the Divine help in answer to earnest prayer. These were lessons I prized most highly, and from which I have benefitted in my start in practice in a measure at least equal to the professional advantages I then enjoyed. Wherever I am placed in life, I shall consider it alike my duty and privilege to aid, as best I can, the objects of the Institution."

As the training of the missionary students was one of the utmost importance to their future usefulness, I give a few details.

Although the religious element constituted the distinction and the glory of the Institution, it must

not be supposed that the medical department was at all overlooked. At this date, 1862, the Dispensary was never more efficiently worked. Our number of students was good and increasing. During the college months the medical officers gave us their valuable services. Progress was also made that winter in the formation of a museum of *Materia Medica* for the students' use, and the Directors were under deep obligations to Dr. Grainger Stewart,¹ Mr. John Brown, and others, for varied and beautiful specimens. Instruction was given daily in *Materia Medica*, in compounding and dispensing of medicines, and also a weekly lecture on Pharmacy.

As superintendent, it was my desire that each mission student during his course should put his hand to every department of the work, medical and missionary. From the first day of entrance he became a witness of the Dispensary practice, so that during the four or five years he was a pupil from twenty to thirty thousand patients passed under his observation ; and as there were a number of medical officers on the staff, he enjoyed the benefit of their varied practice.

¹ When Dr. Grainger Stewart was appointed lecturer on Pathology, he presented to us many of the specimens he had employed to illustrate his lectures on *Materia Medica*, as well as the beautiful cabinet in which they were contained. To these have been added the best specimens gathered here during the last five years, so that our collection is excellent, and will be of great use to the students when getting up the subject.

When the student had made some considerable proficiency in one department, it was placed under his superintendence, and beginners went to him in the first instance with their difficulties. He was in due time transferred to another section, and so on, until he had gone the whole round of the work, and become conversant with the Institution in all its details.

The out-door cases afforded an excellent sphere for both medical and missionary training. At first the beginner accompanied myself, or a senior student, to the dwellings of the poor out-door patients, listened to the examination of them, and was encouraged to put questions. As he gained in experience and confidence, he examined the patients himself in my presence ; and when his medical attainments entitled him to undertake the management of cases, I selected such as were suitable and placed them under his care, with occasional personal inspection.

Household visitation was peculiarly valuable on Sabbath, and there were always many patients whose state made it necessary that they should be seen at their homes that day. I used to take some of the students with me, and go our rounds in the forenoon, when we were sure to find whole families at home. After prescribing for the sick, the people in each house were addressed and prayer offered.

Each student had a prayer-meeting once a week in the district specially assigned to him, and in

going round amongst his patients he took the opportunity of inviting them and their friends to attend, which many did, specially the sick ones, when recovered, to express their appreciation of the doctor's kindness. These meetings were helpful in keeping before the mind of the student that soul-winning was the great end of his mission. Some may say, "How could they get time to study for their classes when so much time was spent in dispensary and missionary work?" But these duties did not occupy so very much time, as might be supposed, when they were gone about in a business-like fashion ; and during the whole time I was in the Cowgate, not one of my students was ploughed in a professional examination. On the contrary, some had certificates of merit, prizes of books, and medals in silver and gold.

CHAPTER VI

A SUPPLEMENTARY TRAINING SCHOOL

THE following passage from the Report of the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society for 1861 presents a subject that exercised me greatly.

“There were other applicants for the Society’s aid, some of them highly qualified; but the committee were constrained to refuse them, chiefly on the ground of their having no means of support but such as they were obliged to earn by teaching. Cases like these may well be supposed by some to have even stronger claims on the Society than those of applicants who have the means of supporting themselves; but it must be kept in view that the committee have no alternative but to disapprove of students of medicine occupying any part of their time in teaching, or other secular employment, knowing well the extent of the acquisitions in general and professional science which are required to enable them to comply with the regulations of licensing Boards, and to satisfy the requirements of this Society. To do justice to these, students must give themselves wholly to their own work. But the fact, now referred to, that meritorious but poor students

are denied that aid which such a Society as this is designed to give them deserves the serious consideration of the friends of the cause. It may well lead them to think of the expediency of founding a few bursaries, to be given by the committee to promising young men who desire to devote themselves to medical missionary service."

In the last year of my own medical course, I had applied to the Society for a grant, hoping thus to have more time for grinding, in view of my approaching final examination ; but I was refused, unless I gave up teaching entirely, which was impossible. Elmslie, also for the same reason, was rejected when he first applied.

There were two grounds of exclusion :—

1st. The applicants must have what the Directors considered a fair amount of preliminary education.

2nd. They must be able to support themselves without teaching.

The question with me was this : May I not for Christ's sake take up the rejectamenta of the Society, and if they seem at all eligible, give them a trial ? The need of missionaries was great, and the cry for help from heathen lands so urgent, it seemed a pity to lose a single hopeful applicant. I could not, of course, take them up myself, I had not the means ; but I laid the matter before the Lord, and pleaded that He would incline, first, my own heart to self-sacrifice, and then the hearts of others of His children, so that no promising youth should be sent

away without a trial ; and He was graciously pleased to hear me. I hoped, also, in following this course, that the Society might perhaps find it possible to set aside these two rules. The students were taken on trial, just as eligible cases presented themselves ; but I never took up a youth who was not disqualified under both rules.

I had soon one or two students in hand, and rented rooms for them in Maconachie's Close, directly opposite the Dispensary. I also engaged a very nice woman to care for them. She was so well and warmly recommended that I indulged the hope there would not be much trouble in her department ; but we never know what a day or a night may bring forth. After the first night she spent in the rooms, she came to me in the morning, and planting a breakfast cup on the table before me, *with great firmness*, she bade me good-bye. Before I could recover from my astonishment she was gone, and I never saw her again. Of course, in my bewilderment, I gazed into the cup, and quickly discovered that the poor woman had not spent the night in sleeping, but in hunting, and there was proof positive before my eyes that the game was truly abundant.

I took the porter with me to the rooms, and all spare moments were employed in drenching every seam in the floors with petroleum. As I had studied carpentry a good deal, in the belief it would be useful to me in China, I was glad to find it useful in the Cowgate. I took off all the skirting and all the

woodwork of the windows and doors, and gave the inside of them a thorough soaking with the same liquid. The furniture, also, was duly attended to, and we were never again troubled with those intruders, who had so seriously disturbed the repose of the worthy matron. After about three years I rented the house above the Dispensary. It was entered by a stair on the left hand of the close, and so was within our own gate. It contained eight good rooms, and two attics. These I got nicely fitted up, and they were soon occupied both by the Society's students and my own.

In my diary of June 25, 1865, I find the following : To-night I closed my Sabbath evening meetings for the season. I have been nearly six years in the Cowgate. What a change since I came here ! What hath the Lord wrought ? "O wheel"—Ezekiel x. 13—was my text. Round me sat six young missionaries, all supported by myself ; *i.e.*, the money either comes out of my pocket, or I get friends to help. Only one has connection with the Society. But he was no burden on them for support. These are by no means all the students I took up. One very pious lad remained with me only one winter. He and I soon became satisfied that he could never be manufactured into a good doctor, so he became an evangelist ; and to this day he is in harness, and is greatly honoured of God as a winner of souls.

Another youth of earnest profession, but blinded with self-conceit, regarded it as a degradation to

have to submit to rules. He thought he should be free to do what he liked, when he liked, and where he liked. As it was impossible to arrange the work of the Dispensary to suit such notions, he left us in three months. One of the six before referred to was as thorough a young hypocrite as I ever met. We were all captivated at the outset by the warmth of his profession ; but ere long his daily walk began to cause uneasiness, and after clinging to him for two years, he compelled me to dismiss him. You must live with the young men, if you wish to know them thoroughly. Some of those taken on trial showed such incapacity for study that it soon became patent they would require a very long course, and I grudged the expenditure that would be needful, so let them go.

CHAPTER VII

THE INSTITUTION A TESTING SCHOOL

MY most delicate and anxious work was with the students. None but God will ever know the anxious days and nights they have cost me. As the Institution was not only to train, but to test the students, the testing process was in my hands, and entailed more anguish upon me than I can express. It did seem an ungracious task to report of a youth that he was "A-wanting"; but when there was no doubt about it, I dared not slur it over. This was the aspect of my work at which I trembled.

My prayer was constantly for patience, and for the Holy Spirit to show me when to notice and when not to notice. Also, I cried to God, who had granted me much, that He would grant me that a Cowgate missionary would just mean a devoted missionary.

With those students who were blessed with real piety, and who had a little experience of life, my intercourse was most pleasant, and without a jar; but with those who seemed to have mistaken their vocation my relations were most delicate.

As no youth was taken up unless he professed to be a Christian, and also entered on his studies with

the view of becoming a missionary, the question naturally arose: "Was it an easy matter to determine the genuineness of his profession, or his fitness as a pupil?" Sometimes it was easy. One lad, when he saw the nature of the duties he would be expected to discharge, wrote of his own accord to the Directors: "I am no missionary!" Others made it painfully evident that their hearts were not in sympathy with the missionary part of the work. One lad, who made a flaming profession, was guilty of conduct so vile that had he not been cleared out, the truly Christian students would not have remained.

At other times the testing was very difficult. For example, a youth sat at my table for five years. I had misgivings about him at the outset, as well as at the close, as to his missionary spirit. He went abroad as a missionary, but wrought incalculable mischief, and then came home to practise. I may here remark that not a single student about whose piety I was uneasy is at this moment engaged in the mission field,—*not one*.

A piety so feeble that it leaves one doubtful as to its reality or genuineness will never stand the temptations to which the medical missionary is exposed. To lend a helping hand to a pious youth, who is struggling to equip himself for mission work, is a joy and privilege; but my conscience could not acquiesce in taking the money contributed for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, and spend-

ing it on mere worldlings to go into practice and enrich themselves.

It was not merely the misuse of the money, but the injury too frequently done to the cause. For instance, an early pupil who went abroad turned aside to make money, and so grieved the Society which had sent him out that for years it would have nothing to do with medical missionaries. This, too, coming at a time when we were striving to work our way into public favour and knowledge, was inexpressibly sad.

It enhanced the difficulty of my position that when I had to give an unsatisfactory report of a student, the Directors and I did not look at it from quite the same standpoint. This will be better understood by my giving the following answer to the question, "What is a medical missionary?"—

1. A legally qualified medical practitioner.
2. Called of God.
3. Wholly set apart ; and
4. To the twofold work of healing the sick and making known the Gospel.

Which element is to preponderate?

The answer is plainly indicated in the definition, for people do not usually speak of being "called of God" to be physicians and surgeons. We are called to special service on behalf of our Lord and Master—the work of winning souls, to which healing is helpful as an adjunct. Being a missionary before I studied medicine, I did not become less a missionary

when I got my medical qualifications. Nay, I was a missionary more thoroughly equipped than formerly, and much more effective and successful.

In the early days of which I write, the relative prominence of these elements was a subject of debate.

Many an anxious hour has this caused me, and many a friendly battle I had to fight, with the view of securing for the missionary element its true and rightful pre-eminence.

To elucidate this point I give two illustrations, drawn from two of the most enlightened friends of the cause, who loved it and laboured hard for its advancement. In December, 1862, my esteemed friend Dr. Coldstream wrote me: "Suffer me, as your friend, to express the sorrow with which I have heard of the attitude you have assumed in regard to our student —. Let me ask you to reconsider your duty in the case under this point of view. Here is a young man, who having been strongly recommended, has been adopted by the Directors, who continues to enjoy the good opinion of his minister, whose conduct is irreproachable, whose manners are pleasant, who professes to be earnestly bent on preparing for a missionary career, who surely has many suitable qualifications; it may be (I do not admit this) that he lacks the missionary spirit, which we all desire to see in our candidates. Is it not the proper thing on your part to tell him so plainly, and to pray with him often, to do all you can to enlighten him,

and even to receive him into the Dispensary, that you may do all this more effectually? He cannot be cast off by us merely because you do not like him."

I liked him very well, for he was an amiable and accomplished youth, but no missionary; and God in His kindness, and in answer to earnest prayer, led the youth himself to endorse my judgment. It was he, referred to before, who wrote to inform the Directors, "*I am no missionary.*"

The second illustration is from my beloved friend Dr. Macqueen, and appeared in *Christian Work* in September, 1868.

"The duty of the medical missionary is, by speaking the word in season—here a little, and there a little—to impress the heart when it is soft with the precious truths of the Gospel.

"The speciality of his office is to unstop the deaf ear, that it may hear the still small voice of love; and to open the heart, that it may feel its exceeding indebtedness to the Lord the Saviour.

"His work is in the hospital and sick-chamber, and his work is done when he can dismiss his patient, convalescent in body and spirit, *to seek and to find elsewhere* bread for his bodily and bread for his spiritual sustenance—the bread that perishes for his perishing body, and the Word of Life, the hidden manna, which came down from heaven, for the sustenance of his never-dying soul.

"We greatly deprecate the tendency to which medical missionaries are (sometimes) apt to yield, to

the detriment of their own work, of subordinating the duties which are assigned to themselves to the illusory object of performing duties which are assigned to others, and which appear to them the more inviting, of greater magnitude and importance than their own. The medical missionary is beset with temptation to be the *preacher* as well as the *healer*; it is a subtle temptation, arising from the yearnings of his own heart to see spiritual fruit of his labours, and from the applause and encouragement he *inconsiderately* receives from others. In acting thus, we fear that generally, like the avaricious dog in the fable, he loses the substance by grasping at the shadow.

“The work of the doctor is to open the door that the evangelist may enter in and find a willing audience for his message of peace and reconciliation. Disinterested kindness on the part of the medical missionary, with love and humility, will not only open the doors of houses, but the doors of hearts as well. Did men, according to the apostolic precept, think soberly of themselves; did they think of themselves not more highly than they ought to think, and abide in the same calling wherein they were called—not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord—then doubtless the Divine plan, well ordered in all things and sure, would accomplish that whereunto it was appointed. But men, dissatisfied with the position and duties assigned to them, and puffed up with vanity and conceit of their own abilities and attainments, intrude on the position and duties of

other men, leaving their own work imperfectly performed, and performing, but very imperfectly, the work of others ; unity, and even harmony, are thus broken, and jealousies and confusions and dissensions are engendered."

As these views fostered the tendency to turn aside to medical practice, leaving the missionary element to look after itself, I felt compelled to comment upon them strongly, and wrote in *Christian Work*, October, 1868, as follows :—

"The great Founder of medical missions went about all Galilee *teaching* in their synagogues, and *preaching* the Gospel of the kingdom, and *healing* all manner of disease *among the people* ; but any tendency we may have to imitate Him is '*greatly to be deprecated.*'

"'The medical missionary,' says this article, 'is beset with the temptation to be the *preacher* as well as the *healer* ; *it is a subtle temptation.*'

"The apostle does not hastily condemn the preaching of Christ even of 'envy and strife' ; but if an unfortunate medical missionary, in imitation of his Master, and from love to souls, should 'preach the Gospel of the kingdom,' he falls into a snare of the devil—'*a subtle temptation.*' Paul felt so strongly the 'yearning of his heart to see spiritual fruit of his labours that he became all things to all if he might by any means gain some' ; but, however strongly the medical missionary may *feel* that 'yearning' over souls, he dares not gratify it in '*preaching* the Gospel

of the kingdom'—that would be to yield to a 'subtle temptation,' to 'lose the substance by grasping at the shadow.' That 'yearning for spiritual fruit,' which seems so dangerous, is a thing for which I pray, that it may be strengthened, not only in myself, but in all my missionary brethren. When a youth applies to be admitted to the benefits of this Institution, the thing after which I most anxiously seek is that dangerous 'yearning' over souls. One of my most interesting daily duties is to strengthen that 'yearning' in the young missionaries, by giving them, under my own superintendence, suitable opportunities of '*preaching* the Gospel of the kingdom.' They are thus daily *trained* to '*preach*' the unsearchable riches of Christ—'*a subtle temptation!*' Enough, 'Though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel.'"

This little sentence out of the Society's Report for 1867 indicates progress in the right direction:—

"Experience during eight years has gradually taught them many things—what to seek, what to avoid, what disappointments to expect, and what to regard as most important.

"One lesson they have learned—to attach more importance than ever to the element of piety and genuine godliness in the young men.

"They have learned that it is better to arrest a large percentage, even of those whom they have adopted, in their way through the Institution, if their

spiritual earnestness be at all doubtful, than to run the fearful risk of permitting them afterwards to enter the mission field with the name merely of medical missionary, without the spirit."

CHAPTER VIII

CLASSIFIED PERPLEXITIES

ONE great difficulty that soon forced itself on my attention was the overlapping of Christian agencies or charities.

It may be set down, as the normal state of things in Scotch cities, that in sickness five denominations visit the same patient,—Established Church, United Presbyterian, Free Church, Congregational, and Baptist,—and when the case becomes chronic an Episcopalian and Plymouth Brother may be added to the number.

It was inexpressibly sad to me to see Christian workers spending their time, their means, and their energies to degrade and pauperize.

The patients laid themselves out to fleece them. What they got from one -ism they carefully concealed from the others.

I was so shocked, when this evil opened up before me, that I took some trouble to gather minute details.

One case (in which I knew the rent was paid, 5s. given weekly, and invalid food provided by the Dispensary, actually from five visitors besides) received 4s., and beef, bread, tea, sugar, and rice in one week,

yet professed to a sixth visitor to be starving, and that a neighbour gave her a penny to get skim milk, as she had not a bite to eat. What a mournful picture !

A poor woman who came to my meeting for some time appeared to listen with much interest. I sent one of the nurses to speak to her, and try to ascertain if I was making myself intelligible to her. The nurse said : " Do you think you are getting any good from the doctor's meetings ? " The reply was : " The only good that ever I got was a pair of stockings ! " Her object in coming to the meetings was plain enough.

The exaggerated statements I received, respecting the illness of those I was called to visit in their own homes, was another source of trouble.

Here is an instance. A message was left one morning, so urgent that it involved a debate with my conscience, as an immediate visit necessitated the breaking of an engagement, and there was no time to send an explanation or apology. The patient was at the extremity of the district ; but I decided on going at once, and set out, perhaps a little self-satisfied, as the sacrifice I was making in the cause of duty seemed to me by no means small. The room was on the ground floor, and on entering I glanced hastily at the bed for the dying man, but he was not there. Seeing nothing in the shape of a door that might lead into a closet or second room, I asked the woman rather sharply, " Where's the sick man, mis-

tress?" Her back was to me, as she was deep in the mysteries of the broth pot; but on hearing my question, she turned coolly round, and straightening herself, replied: "He's ta'en a stap doon tae the butcher's till ye wud come, sir."

Closely allied to the preceding was a very large mass of cases of pretended illness, and of sickness assumed, to elicit charity.

I had just come in one afternoon from a long, weary tramp up and down the Cowgate closes and long stairs, and had flung off my boots to cool my burning soles, when a lady stepped in and asked if I would go with her to a poor dying woman. It was a little hard, for I was counting on a rest; but then it was only one case, and the sufferer was so ill, she was unable to speak.

While replacing my boots, I said, half in jest, "Of course the woman lives in the top flat." "Yes," replied the lady, "on the top floor." It was soon reached, and on entering I found the bed so placed, with a curtain at its head, that a little passage was formed into the room. Here the lady lingered, while I passed round in front to examine the patient. Speechless the woman was, no doubt, and apparently insensible; still, it only needed a few minutes to discover the true nature of the ailment. But what was to be done? There stood our lady friend with her compassionate heart, waiting to hear in what way she might be useful, and the puzzle was how best to open the case to her. I was silent, and time seemed long

in my perplexity. At last, unable to repress my indignation, I relieved myself somewhat in this manner : "Get up, you wicked woman ! Get up out of that ! It's a burning shame to lie there pretending to be ill, when nothing ails you." During this explosion the lady vanished, and in a few seconds a deep, rapid inspiration, as a suitable preface to returning consciousness, showed the outburst had not been lost upon the patient. It is almost incredible, by those altogether ignorant of such matters, how soon the dying woman found her tongue, and at the fireside was talking with only the slightest trace of an impediment in her speech. Frankly I confess I never had so extreme a case that made so rapid a recovery ; but the group it is used to illustrate was a very large and varied one.

Naturally this leads me to refer to the filling up of schedules for the Destitute Sick Society. This was the name of a charity in Edinburgh, which, on the recommendation of a householder and doctor, inquired into the state of the sick person recommended, and, if he or she were judged worthy, ministered to them money and comforts during the time of their sickness. The filling in of these schedules entailed upon me a prodigious amount of vexation every week, especially on Wednesday and Thursday, the latter being the committee day of the D.S.S. Those who were not very ill, and who might perfectly well have come to me, judged they would be looked upon as all the worse that they were in bed, and so their schedule would stand a better chance ; and those who were not

ill at all, supposed they could better act out their sham in bed than on the Dispensary floor, and I would get pressing messages to lose no time in visiting them, as if they were dying. My heart faints when I think of the weary wandering and climbing I had round these districts for nothing. New students, when they joined first, could not, of course, diagnose these cases, and came for me to go with them to diagnose a sham. Sometimes I resolved to sign every schedule presented, but to sign the truth and leave the case with the visitor, hence I have made such entries as "sham," "catarrh," "constipation," "nihil," "love of money," "love of drink," "laziness," etc., etc.; but I could not continue that course, though it was most difficult to get rid of unsuitable applicants.

Men and women with "dry wizzens," and their mouths watering at the prospect of a *gaudeamus*, are not easily diverted from their purpose; and many a time, when I refused to sign their schedules, they poured forth on me most terrible imprecations.

In such a sphere of labour the steady run of sad heart-breaking cases can well be imagined. These may be broken up into two classes, well marked in typical specimens, but insensibly fading into each other, overlapping and blending around their borders.

In the one class a decided element of moral delinquency appears, whilst the prevailing feature of the other is poverty. I was summoned one forenoon to Mrs. —, who lived nearly opposite. There was

real difficulty in gaining access to her room, the staircase was so low ; but once within, the apartment was spacious enough, and empty enough too. The only furniture was the never-failing chair with a broken back, and on it a few pieces of broken earthenware. Far in at the extreme end three long, thin pieces of iron, stretched between two rickles of stones in the form of ribs, constituting a fireplace in which was no fire, seemed to grin in horrid mockery over the desolation. The poor woman was sitting on some shavings, which was all she had for a bed, just underneath the slates. Her covering was a petticoat and an old merino gown, so worn that it had become glazed. She was sitting, as I have said, and had been sitting for forty-eight hours almost as still as if dead. The least attempt at movement sent a "stang" through her frame that made her cry out. Her joints were swollen and painful, the left arm only retaining a little freedom. She was suffering from a severe attack of rheumatism. My earnest desire was just to lift her up gently and carry her to the Infirmary ; but at least a week elapsed before I could get that accomplished. The weather was bitterly cold, and though it was the month of March it had been snowing heavily most of the day preceding. That evening it began to thaw, and about midnight the snow on the roof loosened and began to roll, rumble, and thunder immediately over the poor woman's head. Entirely ignorant of the cause, and imagining the house was falling, she sprang up, and with a shriek

of terror staggered into the middle of the floor, where she fell with a crash and lay in helpless agony till the neighbours from below, hearing the noise, came up and put her back on her shavings. This was the case I was called to visit. I left her to go directly home to dinner. When I got into my warm, comfortable sitting-room, and saw the clean tablecloth, the smoking viands, the blazing fire, and the manifold comforts all around, the contrast was too much for me, and I am not ashamed to confess my emotion quite got the mastery over me. Not altogether was it pity for the poor sufferer I had just left, but the question was forcing itself upon me, giving rise to varied and lively feelings, "Who maketh thee to differ?"

Let me give one more case to illustrate the first division of the subject I have touched on. Whilst sitting at tea one night with three of the young missionaries, the bell rang furiously; and as the door was open, a shriek for help came ringing upstairs. Setting down my cup, I seized my hat, cleared the stairs at three bounds, and ran. The messenger did not linger to say what was the matter, but ran ahead. Soon I reached a crowd, that opened to let me through, and going up two flights of stairs I found myself in a room so packed with people that four policemen had difficulty in keeping a small space clear round a man who was lying on the floor. In a moment I was at his side, but only to find that the heart had ceased to beat. He had fallen downstairs:

the neck was broken : the man was dead. He was not drunk ! No, no ! People never got drunk in the Cowgate. He “had taken a glass.” He “had just been tasting.” Pity he should have tasted ! The examination had been brief ; but brief as it was, I had difficulty in getting through it because of a huge, lumbering hulk of a man who staggered about the corpse and kept tumbling in my way every instant ; he too had been “tasting.” He blubbered and poured forth his idiotic gibberish as he fumbled about, a drunken son over the corpse of a drunken father. My heart was sick, and truly it was no wonder that by the time I got home the tea had lost all relish.

There is an epidemic, indeed, in our district that I fear greatly, not that I apprehend infection, but because of its prevalence and mortality. It sweeps into a hopeless eternity a far greater number of miserable creatures than any fever epidemic I have ever encountered. The following case illustrates the nature of the disease. John —— was attacked with inflammation in both lungs. As he lived in a very low lodging-house, I wrote out an order for his admission to the Infirmary. This order was converted by his wife into a begging letter, and served up to the charitable throughout the city with a host of lies. The day after giving the order I was in the close where John lived, and ran into his lodging to inquire if he had got safely into the Infirmary. “No,” was the curt reply. “Not in the Infirmary ? then where is he ?” I asked, and was answered as briefly as

before, "Out." After a little I turned to leave the room, when a man stepped into it carefully muffled up. I was struck with his haggard look and hurried breathing, and exclaimed, "My dear sir, you seem ill, and should be in bed." He pulled down the muffler and revealed my poor friend John. His wife had raised a good deal of money on the strength of that order, and John got out of bed, crept with her round to the nearest alehouse to quench his burning thirst, and gratify his long-cherished appetite once more. I met him on his return. He lay down again to rise no more, and in forty-eight hours was in eternity.

My pen can give no conception of the terrible depravity, the appalling ungodliness that prevailed round that district. Sometimes on Saturday night and on Sabbath evening it was almost overwhelming. What sights and sounds! The crowds, the din and bustle! The shouting, yelling, shrieking, and cursing! The pushing, rioting, quarrelling, and fighting! Truly it seemed a place WITHOUT GOD, though not without hope. It was for such that Jesus died. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Publicans and sinners get into the kingdom when Pharisees are cast out.

CHAPTER IX

SAMPLES OF FRUIT

AFTER so much on discouragements and difficulties, it seems indispensable to give a few samples of the grapes we were privileged to gather. I give them briefly. The element, or feature, in each case determining its selection is *hopelessness*. In every instance fruit meet for repentance has been produced in greater or less abundance.

Take this case, to begin with. Perhaps no one ever approached a more hopeless sinner. He had been addicted to drink for years, and long-continued intemperance had brought upon him the disease that now confined him to bed. Speak to *that* man about his soul! The truth came rebounding from his seared conscience like a gutta-percha ball from a stone pavement. Not a trace of interest lighted up his eye as I pointed out the sinfulness of his life, and strove to show him his need of a Saviour. His whole appearance and attitude, even in bed, bespoke indifference, and told plainly and impressively, "Jehovah Tzidkenu is nothing to me." Continued kindness, however, opened a chink even in that hard heart, into which was dropped the incorruptible seed. The

apathy changed to indescribable anxiety. Eight times in one day we were summoned to his side, and five times I was actually present, telling of the Lord our Righteousness. One touch of the Divine Spirit made the dead soul live, and the dull, listless eyes gleamed with an intelligent interest as the trembling sinner drank in the story of redeeming love and mercy, till he was enabled in faith to cast himself and his sins on Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God—to live and die in peace.

This woman, too, was hopeless enough! She had not only gone astray herself, but had led others into the paths of sin. She was the keeper of a den in one of the *cul de sacs* of Edinburgh, where, like a spider, she spread her toils to entrap the unwary. She took ill, and, on the first intimation that her case was serious, a horror of great darkness came over her soul at the thought of passing in her guilt and pollution into the presence of an offended God. Her spiritual malady became so engrossing that I was obliged to remind her that by taking the remedies prescribed for her bodily ailment she might prolong the day of grace. Again and again, out of compassion, we summoned every inmate of the Dispensary to united prayer that the Lord would guide her to rest in Jesus, and He heard us. She was sent after that to the Infirmary, to die as she thought, but she did not die. She could not read, but such was her desire for the sincere milk of the Word that during her convalescence she picked up correctly many verses of

Scripture, by merely hearing them repeated to patients in the adjoining beds. When she left the Infirmary, she withdrew to a distance from the scene of her sin and guilt, to live a life of faith on the Son of God.

Here is another case—that of a Romanist, who, through means of the daily address in the Dispensary, learned to confess her sins to One who could really forgive her sins, and cleanse her from all unrighteousness. She could not read, but her little girl had learned to read the New Testament, and what was merely a lesson to the child became spirit and life to the mother's soul. Of course the change showed itself, and her brutal, superstitious husband beat her almost into the grave, but not into her former superstitions. She grew in grace, and in the knowledge of her Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Again, a man calling himself a friend of Tom Paine stumbled into the Dispensary, brimful of infidel self-sufficiency and pride. Forgetful that he was in another man's house, and that he had come to seek a favour, he silenced the lady visitor who was reading the Scriptures, and would not permit them to be read in his hearing. That man, though still poor, is now practically doing the work of a colporteur, and preaches the faith he once despised.

Again, let me tell of a man whom I met first when he was reeling round the grave in delirium tremens, beggared and demoralized. Not *very* hopeful, one would say; but now he is clothed and in his right

mind. Once he was regretting his inability to speak for Him who loved him and gave Himself for him ; “ but,” he added, “ my presence amongst my old comrades lets them see what Christ has done for me, and that may encourage them.” He gave me 5s. every month to help our Cowgate charities.

Another woman gave me many a heartache, not that she was given to intemperance or any form of immorality, but there was something very cutting in the quiet, cool decision with which she would say, “ You needn’t ask me to your meeting, doctor, for I’ll not come. I wouldn’t tell you a lie about it.” But she *did* come, and made wonderful discoveries about sin and salvation, and then she daily strove to induce others to come to One who had forgiven her all that ever she did.

This man had been literally steeped in alcohol for fifty years. I should have liked to see a post-mortem of his brain. He had not darkened a kirk door for forty years. A blasphemer, a drunkard, injurious. His pious wife had, for a time during her life, got a missionary to conduct a prayer-meeting in her room, hoping her husband might hear and accept the truth ; but she was disappointed. He was out of the way every meeting night.

He had been much exposed from his calling as a street-layer ; rheumatism had worked hard upon him, and had given him one or two twists which in no way contributed to his gainliness ; moreover, as these had been rendered permanent, they imparted an as-

pect of rigidity to the outer man that harmonized admirably with a certain doggedness of spirit that characterized him ; and when he spoke it was in a hard, abrupt, sententious way that was far from attractive. Such was " Old William " when I first saw him. He was suspicious of me, for I bore the hated name of missionary ; but continued kindness to his daughter gradually removed his uneasiness, and at length he consented to come to our Sabbath evening prayer-meeting. This was a great step, but in his eyes it did not involve so much respect for religion to go and hear a doctor as to go and hear a minister. Little did he know what was before him that night as he tottered down the steps inside the chapel, and took his seat in the semi-circle that formed part of this ancient sanctuary. The God who brought him thither brought a message to his soul. That night I spoke from the beautiful passage about Naaman the Syrian, dwelling chiefly on the command to wash and be clean, believe and live. It is needless to state here the precious Gospel truths unfolded in that address ; sufficient to say, it was listened to by the old man with earnest attention. It seemed as if a gleam of sunshine from the upper sanctuary had been let in upon his darkened soul, and he went home with no small measure of happiness. The truth had taken possession of him ; he could not shake it off. Indeed, he had no wish, for it was making him happy. When the nurse called next day to inquire after the daughter, but also to ascertain how he had

liked the meeting, she found him rocking to and fro in his chair, and heard him muttering to himself, "Believe, believe, just believe"; then his eye catching sight of her as she advanced, he cried, "Oh, come awa', woman; I never was so happy as this a' my life."

This happiness lasted only two days, and was followed by a sense of sinfulness and guilt that was truly terrible. The burden of his anguish was often breathed out thus: "And that's the God I've sinned against; I thought He was a hard Man." He could seldom go further, for sobs choked his utterance and convulsed his rigid frame.

It was long ere he found rest to his weary, burdened soul. One night, as the nurse was panting up his stair with a huge load of chaff for the bed, a remark was made about the weight of her burden. "Ah," he said, "she'll soon get rid of her burden, but when shall I get rid of mine?" During the long period of his anxiety, the sunshine that at first lit up his soul was of great service in keeping him from despair. His distress was great from deep self-loathing, and an inexpressible sense of shame and sorrow that he should have lived so long without such a God, that he should have sinned so long against such a God. And when at length he was enabled to lay his head on the bosom of Jesus and rest—yes, rest—how pregnant to him with meaning were now the words with which his new life began: "Believe, just believe; believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt

be saved." The change was deep and abiding, and affected heart and life. Forgiven much, he loved much, and he was also enabled to say, "I thank God, through Christ Jesus our Lord."

John — was a sober man; he had not tasted drink for ten years. He had met with an injury which forced him to give up his trade, and he picked up a precarious living by going about the streets carrying placards. Before he told me his calling, I believed he was begging. I had never thought of those perambulating signboards as belonging to the same genus as ourselves, or having immortal souls to be saved; yet here was one of them come as a trembling sinner, seeking the way of salvation. Five weeks before, the Divine Spirit lodged the arrow of conviction in John's heart at our Sabbath evening prayer-meeting, when I spoke on the text, "If the righteous scarcely be saved," etc., and since then he had had no rest night or day. He tried to please God, but at night was terribly afraid. He worked hard to win God's approval, but got no peace. I did what I could to help him, and point him to Jesus. A Sabbath address about Christ washing the disciples' feet brought a gleam of hope. He said, "I am very poor, and sometimes very ill off; but I feel, if only I could get my soul saved, I would have everything. I would not care what else I had." That was hopeful; for when a sinner comes thus to prize Christ, he is not far from the kingdom. Again I saw John, and had a long talk. He seemed to have found peace

on the true foundation. He was evidently happy. When I asked what he thought of Christ now, he said, "My sins murdered Him, sir, actually murdered Him. I can't think of it but it makes me shudder." He was an utterly uneducated man, but he saw clearly the way of salvation: Substitution—Christ on the cross *for him*. "*He bare my sins;*" and so he had peace through our Lord Jesus Christ. How little a man of the world knows of the blessedness and trembling joyfulness of watching over the new birth of a soul. "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good."

Just one case more. When she first visited us, some six years ago, a blinded Papist, she was struggling to pick up a precarious subsistence by labouring in the fields: a work to which her strength was altogether unequal, and which aggravated the infirmity that brought her to the Dispensary for help. Naturally modest and respectful, she slipped into the lowliest corner in the waiting-room; but the manifest interest with which she listened to the offers of a free and full salvation through the blood of the Lamb attracted attention; and when she came to be examined medically, I gathered some particulars of her history, and learned that she had a hard daily conflict with pain and poverty. That evening a nurse visited her home with some comforts. "When I told her I was from the Dispensary," said the nurse, "she gave me a very hearty welcome. Her illness was a painful one, and prevented her working, so she had been

in great want. She told me there was not a bit in the house ; that when it was dark she was going with a few rags to get three-halfpence to buy a pennyworth of meal and a half-pennyworth of milk ; that she had had nothing better for many a day. I urged her to lay her case before the Lord, and said, if she were willing, I would pray with her. ‘ Do you pray ? ’ she said in astonishment. ‘ Well,’ I said, ‘ when we want anything in the Dispensary, we just tell our Heavenly Father, and He helps us.’ After prayer she listened with much earnestness to what I said about the Saviour. Before leaving, I gave her the articles with which I had been sent, for which she was very grateful.”

At a subsequent visit to the Dispensary she heard an address which went through her heart like a two-edged sword. Very speedily the rags of righteousness in which she had clothed herself vanished. Her standing in holy mother Church, baptismal regeneration, confirmation, penances, and good works, dwindled into utter nothingness, and she felt herself guilty, polluted, helpless, naked, under the eye of a just and holy God. Referring at a later period to this time of heart-searching, she said, “ You know nothing about what we Catholics have to suffer from the time you make us doubt till we find rest in Jesus.” During this season of conviction the nurse dropped in one night and found the mother and son diligently studying the Bible by the light of the fire, and a copper was accepted thankfully for the purchase of a candle

that they might pursue their inquiries in circumstances more favourable.

It was at the Sabbath evening meeting that she found peace and rest to her soul. The subject was the woman touching the hem of Christ's garment, and the Saviour's gracious words: "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague." She was enabled that night, by the Spirit, to press through the crowd of opposing difficulties that burdened her own heart, and in faith to grasp the living, loving, precious Redeemer as her own. There was no mistake about it. The glorious words were spoken to her: "Daughter, go in peace, and be whole of thy plague of sin"; "Thy sins are forgiven thee"; and the echo seemed to ring in her ears through life. When occasionally her mind wandered in her last illness, she was heard muttering, "Thy sins are forgiven thee"; and when she sent us, by the nurse, her dying blessing, it was accompanied with the message, "Tell the doctor I have a hold of the hem of Christ's garment."

Her deathbed was eminently peaceful, and not a few Christian friends who visited her were profited by the exhibition of her humble trust in God. One gentleman expressed to her the hope that the Saviour was near her in this the hour of her distress; she at once replied, "He's never absent." Her poor invalid son, who had long suffered from phthisis, and whom she nursed with much tenderness, she was enabled to hand over to Him who has promised to be

the stay of the orphan. Gladly would he have gone home first, for he, too, hoped in that Saviour who prepares mansions for them that love Him ; but, as he said himself, "It was worth while living, just to see my mother die." But enough ; I dare not tell a tithe of the truth, even although my object is not to glorify our lost friend, but to magnify the riches of grace manifested towards her. "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him ? "

CHAPTER X

WORK AMONG THE CITY ARABS

SOME time ago I visited Fountainbridge to revive old memories. Entering Ponton Street, I passed through the third passage on the left hand, and found myself at the door of a room in which, many years ago, I taught a Bible class every Sabbath at the close of the afternoon service. It was here I first made acquaintance with the city Arabs.

My ordinary pupils could not be said to belong to that caste ; but in a short time a youth was drawn into my little room whose pedigree no one could question. One afternoon, when discharging the usual class duties, we found ourselves in a moment in midnight darkness. The shutter of the only window was suddenly closed and fastened outside. As some of my scholars were not quite orthodox in their views respecting the distinction between mine and thine, I hastily planted myself, with outstretched arms, between them and the movables, and sent them to open the door, but that was found to be fastened outside. The stronger amongst us exerted ourselves to effect deliverance, but in vain. At length we thundered at the door and attracted the attention of

the people opposite, but they brought no help. It was discovered afterwards that the handle of our door was tied by a rope to the handle of that fronting us, so that the harder we pulled, striving to get out, the more effectually we shut our neighbours in, and prevented their coming to the rescue. It was a clever trick, and I longed to make the acquaintance of its author.

Some weeks after, he was pointed out to me, when not expecting a visit, and he was only aware of my presence by my hand on his collar. He turned hastily round, and scanned me with a look of great uneasiness, not knowing for which particular one of the many delinquencies he was no doubt charging himself with he was now to be called to account. His anxiety was but for a moment, as it was impossible to preserve an aspect of sternness in view of such an apparition. There could be no doubt I held in my grasp a live specimen of a city Arab. His appearance is not easily described. His dry, untrimmed hair shot right out from his scalp, and gave him an air that was singularly wild. His long, lank, lean, hungry-looking, ill-hung-together framework was stowed away in the inside of a prodigious moleskin coat, which, on account of its extravagant width, refused to enter into terms of intimacy with its present occupant. It was adorned with great brass buttons and huge flaps to the pouches. Its tails descended below the youngster's calves, producing, when he walked, a wholesome ventilation ; but when

he ran, threatening an entanglement and overthrow that made the spectator uneasy. He could easily, by simply elevating his arms, have withdrawn himself from the nether end of his garment, and escaped ; but so little would have remained to cover him that he would certainly have been apprehended for exposing his person. His features were not at all unpleasant ; his eye was really beautiful ; and despite his wretchedness, vice had not, as yet, stamped her accursed brand on his brow. His parents were dead. He had not enjoyed the luxury of a bed for eighteen months. He usually crept into a hayloft, a byre, a canal boat, or a stair. He was not guilty of wearing linen.

He had learned too well
What 'twas to be an orphan boy.

After a free and full forgiveness, he promised to come to my Bible class, at least for once, to see how he should like it. He came regularly afterwards, and I was sometimes able to comfort him. At the end of several months I was called to leave that district, and went one afternoon to bid good-bye to some of those with whom I had become acquainted. When passing along Downie Place, on my way home, I received a gentle tap on the arm, and turning round saw my young Arab friend. " I hear you're gaun awa'," he said, and the tears filled his eyes. " Yes," I replied, as kindly as possible, and tried to cheer him ; but it wouldn't do. He fairly broke down, weeping like a child, and ejaculated betwixt his sobs, " I'll hae nae

freen' noo to tak' care o' me." This exhibition was as unexpected as it was impressive. These tears have never been forgotten. This was the first real Arab I had ever encountered, and I discovered that he had not only a human but a tender heart.

It is not my intention to follow the destinies of the young Arab who was left weeping at Downie Place. Suffice it to say of him that his tears were not shed in vain. They fell upon the pavement, but descended like drops of molten lead into my heart, and burned into it the conviction that the wildest Arab boy has a soul—a precious, never-dying soul. Neither do I propose giving an account of all I have done since amongst the class, with the view of bringing some of them at least to the knowledge of the truth. All that is aimed at is a brief notice of what has been done in this direction through the Dispensary ; and this mainly with the view of keeping alive, in connection with the Institution, the memory of one of my most devoted fellow-workers, who has long since gone to her rest.

On coming to labour in the district, now many years ago, it appeared to me as if the ruffianism of the city were congregated at the Cowgate-head. On the Sabbath evenings especially, work being suspended, the groups of wild boys and lads were numerous and large. It was impossible to be indifferent to their presence. Their noisy demonstrations compelled attention ; and though we might contrive to pass them, utterly regardless of the interest of their souls,

we were obliged to be most considerately mindful of the interest of our own shins. It was not safe to go near them. They are continually fighting and wrestling, and plunging about in the most alarming fashion ; and what is even more dangerous, a group may be standing as still as the grave, and apparently all harmonious and peaceful, when in an instant, without the slightest warning, one of the number rushes backward with the most furious recklessness, and the first intimation you get of danger is when his huge iron heel-piece is raking your tibia ; or his elbow, boring against your ribs, leaves you gasping and struggling to give utterance to the benediction that is now gurgling in your throat.

“A glorious field for mission work,” said Dr. Chalmers, as he looked down on this district from George IV. Bridge ; and so assuredly it is, but the little corner into which I have just been introducing my readers puzzled me greatly. I knew not how to set about its cultivation. My medicine I hoped might be useful to me, but these youths never seemed to be ill. A dead Arab I have never seen. Sometimes, however, they came to me with cuts, bruises, fractures, and sores, and occasionally with a smart bronchitis ; and these visits I sought to improve so as to get an influence over them. Towards the close of my first season I joined some Christian friends, and gathered the lads into the Magdalene Chapel on the Sabbath evenings to instruct them ; but we were soon compelled to give up this meeting as doing more

harm than good, although some of my fellow-labourers were neither chicken-hearted nor easily driven from their purpose. Plenty of boys came, but we could not manage them. It is difficult to imagine, and impossible to describe, the scenes we witnessed on these occasions. A boy looks you in the face as innocently as if mischief were a stranger to him, and perhaps addresses some interesting question to you, whilst his toes are drumming the front of the pew. If he detects a suspicious glance flitting across your eye, on account of the quarter whence the noise proceeds, he gives a punch to his neighbour, tells him to be quiet, and rebukes him for his wickedness in hindering him from learning the truth. In this, our first attempt, we never got the correct name and address of a single boy. "What is your name, my man?" "John Russell, sir." "Ah! that's an honourable name." "That it is, sir." "Where do you live, my boy?" "At Moray Place, sir."¹ On expressing astonishment, and hinting that the garments were scarcely in keeping with the family residence, the youth, with an inimitable air of waggery, turns to his companion, and stretching out towards him his arm, from which dangles in ribbons the sleeve of his jacket, he exclaims, "Man, Jock, d'ye hear 'im? he sez I hevna on my Sunday claes!" Many, many a time our Bible class seemed transformed into a menagerie. The singing was marred by the intermixture of every

¹ A fashionable part in Edinburgh.

discordant sound the ingenuity of the lads could invent. The cries of animals were ever and anon issuing from some quarter of the building. The mewling of the cat was particularly in request. The *myā-ā-oo* was always prolonged into a dismal wail, and wound up with an energetic "fizz." "Talk," says Dr. Davidson, "of the gross darkness and depravity of heathenism! I can honestly say that I have never met in heathen countries ignorance more complete, and depravity more deep and hopeless, than I have seen in this Cowgate of Edinburgh. Certainly, I should a thousand times rather deal with the poor ignorant Malagasy, whose depravity, great as it is, has not grown up under the sun of Christianity and civilization, than I would with your young Cowgate Arabs. Your missionary students will find in such the fittest preparation for future usefulness."

The Magdalene Chapel, fitted up for Church service after the fashion of the seventeenth century, was singularly unsuitable for such an experiment as that now described, and therefore I was encouraged next season to aid in a renewed effort amongst the Arabs in a large, commodious room; but the result again was defeat. We were completely beaten, and obliged to admit that, in spite of all our efforts, the meetings were more productive of evil than of good. Experience is costly; I had, however, learned from it that we were on the wrong track, and the conviction was forced in upon me that if we should ever get the mastery over the boys, we must act on the

old adage, *Divide et impera*. Although I approached the winter full of my new idea, and hopeful of success, there were so many difficulties connected with its practical application, it was not till the following spring that it could be put to the test.

“It was in the month of April” (1863), writes Miss Mercer, “at the Wednesday prayer-meeting in the Dispensary, that I was stirred up, by your earnest prayer, to try and do something for these boys. You then deplored, in deep anguish of spirit, the outcast condition of these Ishmaelites, as you called them; and the utter failure of every effort to get them to listen, in a quiet and becoming way, to the truths of the Gospel. And you wrestled with God in such an earnest manner, appealing to Him: ‘Were there none of His children to be taken from these Arabs—these outcasts!’ I was so distressed about them that I asked the Lord if He would use the talent He had given me (singing) to subdue them into some sort of quiet behaviour, and this led to my placing my services at your disposal.” This was the very description of person I needed. Meek and gentle, Miss Mercer could bear with them; her large, loving heart prompted her to self-sacrifice for them; and her extraordinary vocal powers quite entranced the youths. Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast. Soon a little room was hired at the Cowgate-head. On Sabbath, the 3rd of May, one of my nurses made preparations for a small tea-party. A carpet was laid on the floor, and a particularly white tablecloth

covered the table. After surveying the preparations, I hastily betook myself to prayer, and my beloved friend, "in great fear and trembling," sallied forth to make an assault on the ruffianism of the Cowgate. She passed and re-passed the lads, but could not muster fortitude to approach them; but observing three or four by themselves, she went up to them, and said, "Boys, I wish you would come with me for a little." They all stared, but did not speak. "I am not going to take you to Church or Chapel; but if you come, I promise you something nice." "You're no gaun to tak's there?" and they pointed to the Magdalene Chapel. "No, no," she replied; "come and see." "Come on, then," said the one to the other; and turning to her, they said, "Gang you on, and we'll follow."

Four young Arabs sat down to tea with Miss Mercer. They seemed much from home, and began to giggle and laugh at everything and nothing. This was perplexing, but the wildest youth soon went out, and she was able to get a little conversation and singing with the others. When telling them an interesting story, she was interrupted by the noise outside. The wild boy had gone and brought several others more wicked than himself, and made such a disturbance in the stair that the police were called in by the neighbours. Miss Mercer went to the door and promised to readmit the leader, on condition that he behaved himself; the others were dispersed by the police. During the remainder of

the evening there was comparative quiet, and the youths asked and obtained leave to come back on the following Sabbath. "At the close of my first night, I joined you and other Christian friends in the 'Upper Room' of the Dispensary, related all that had happened, and prayers and thanks were offered to the God of all grace for the success He had vouchsafed in this small beginning."

Next Sabbath seven lads were present, and they were very troublesome. When beginning to pray, a slight shuffling attracted Miss Mercer's attention, and on opening her eyes she saw a hand gliding quietly across the table towards the contents of the sugar-basin. At the same moment a lad bawled out, "Ah, you're stealing the sugar, man." "No, I'm not," replied the culprit; "she sees me." The only means of getting a little quiet was by singing a hymn. At the close, when she asked them to kneel with her to pray, one of the youngsters said with much gravity, "I canna d'ut, ma'am, I dinna belang to your Kirk"; and turning to his companions, he cried in an authoritative tone, "Kneel doun, lads, and say your prayers." This was a disheartening night, but she got one or two correct addresses, and that opened up the way to friendly intercourse during the week, and soon she got a great hold over them. Some of them she helped into situations; and some found their wardrobes improved under her sisterly care. When they got into prison, or any other scrape, she spared no pains to help them. The lads soon discovered they had got a

friend, and they used her as such—she became their confidante. The class soon increased to twelve ; and when they met on the Sabbath evenings, they were much more quiet and orderly. One of the scholars, a lad about eighteen, who had never been in church in his life, and who was afraid to enter one in this district, lest his companions should laugh at him, came to me at Fingal Place, on the Sabbath mornings, that I might take him to the house of God. There seemed hope for the boys ; but the devil had set his face against these Arabian Nights' Entertainments, and he baffled us again. If there was growing comfort within, there was growing disturbance without. Writing about the class on a subsequent evening, Miss Mercer says, "They sat very quietly, and listened attentively ; but I was very much annoyed by some of their companions (in revenge for not being allowed in) coming and knocking at the door, like to drive it in." These noisy outbreaks on the Sabbath evenings became so intolerable to the tenants in the house that I was compelled in a short time to give up the class.

At the commencement of next session I was encouraged to extend my operations, and forty on an average joined us at tea every Sabbath. These were divided into four classes ; two were taught by lady friends, and two by Messrs. Elmslie and Crabbe. The state of Miss Mercer's health prevented her from joining us. Three of the classes met in the Dispensary, and the other in a room belonging to me on

the opposite side of the street. More interesting classes we could not wish, or a finer description of material to work upon—real genuine Arabs; but the noise outside was very troublesome and distracting. Every imaginable form of cry was adopted by those outside to catch the attention of their comrades within, and not without effect. Gladly would I have taken all in, had it been possible, but that was not in my power; and besides, there were crowds of children, and hordes of girls, who congregated round the doors and made a great noise. The neighbours around the Dispensary were irritated; the tenants of the house opposite were furious; and sometimes a perfect deluge of abuse was poured upon me when any of them happened to catch me on the stair. Truly the boys were wild and provoking. They actually tore down the wall of the Dispensary, and bored a hole clear through into the back waiting-room. Unwilling to give up the classes, I applied to the superintendent of police for protection, and was most courteously promised all that was asked; but he did not seem to know that between his promise and its fulfilment there was a Popish sergeant. I came to know to my cost that between his order and its execution there was always a hitch, and that I never got what was needed. One of the officers who came seemed better to do the duties of spy than of protector. Instead of standing at the Dispensary gate, he ranged round the back of the premises, and looked in at the windows; and one night, in the

passage, he had the impudence to say to me, "Are there any of our lads here?" Knowing well what he meant, I replied, "Hold your tongue, sir! A lot of wild animals! If we succeed in making human beings of them, we shall leave them to fix their religion for themselves." I was troubled with no more questions. I was able to keep the classes going during the whole of that season, and wound up with a strawberry "treat," which the lads enjoyed amazingly.

I was advised not again to assemble the boys in the Dispensary. The terrible rioting on the Sabbath evenings gave rise to much irritation all round the neighbourhood, and there was reason to fear that an unfriendly feeling might spring up towards me and my work. I was for some time much perplexed about the lads, not knowing what to do with them. On returning from my holidays, every one of them that met me in the street greeted me with the inquiry, "When are the classes to begin?" and in many ways showed an interest in the previous winter's work, which made me all the more anxious to do something on their behalf. It occurred to me that I might hire rooms in various quarters of the city, a little distant from the Cowgate, and encourage them to attend there. This was accordingly done, but the plan failed completely. Both within and without there was trouble. I longed, and prayed, and worked for the opportunity of telling them, in quietness, of the love of God in Christ; and I could

not resist the conviction that, though Satan might be allowed to thwart, perplex, and baffle me in this precious and interesting work, the Lord would give me the desire of my heart.

During the remainder of that season I tried to keep up much personal, friendly intercourse with the lads, that I might not fall out of acquaintance with them ; and then I began an experiment of a kind entirely different from any hitherto attempted, mainly with the view of keeping the youths in contact with me. I engaged a professional singer, with whom Miss Mercer joyfully associated herself, to teach them music and singing. They assembled twice a week in the schoolroom at Cowgate-head in great numbers. I tried to prepare the teacher for rough work ; but it was with him as I doubt not it is with many of my readers : he had no conception of what I had been speaking about. Five minutes in the schoolroom opened his eyes ; and when I entered shortly after, I found him bewildered, helpless, and actually pale with fright. And little wonder. The youngsters had rushed in with feelings of jubilation, as if this were the jolliest plan I had ever tried with them, when as many as pleased might come together for a rumpus, which was the only idea they had of a singing class. To speak to them was out of the question, even roaring would not have been heard ; but a song, beautifully sung, gained a gradually enlarging circle of attentive listeners, till the room was quiet. Oft that winter were we struck with the

power of music. When the boys themselves sang, which they soon learned to do pretty well, and in parts, they were not at all subdued ; the last note was frequently converted into a bray or shriek, whilst a companion got a poke in the ribs, or was toppled over the form, or received some other little courtesy of that nature ; but when a duet was sung by the teachers, the pupils were fairly spellbound by it ; and even after the applause there was a season of quiet, in which they would listen to a word of advice. During the first half-hour songs were sung, and during the second sacred melodies. In this way they became acquainted with the words and music of many of our most precious hymns, such as "Rock of Ages," "There is a Fountain," etc., etc. ; and truly it was not easy to survey the group and listen unmoved whilst they poured forth with a real heartiness the glorious truths of the Gospel. The behaviour improved on the whole as the session advanced ; but from first to last the management of them was an arduous and exhausting duty.

In addition to what might be called the normal stream of annoyance and worry, episodes of every type and complexion were introduced to diversify the proceedings. One night a youth came in with a lighted coal in his jacket pocket. As he entered late and I knew him to be a thorough rogue, he was kept so constantly covered with my eye that he found it impossible to carry out the glorious exploit with which he no doubt expected to dazzle his companions ;

and in a short time my attention was drawn to an intolerable smell of singeing, followed soon after by a pretty dense cloud of smoke, in the midst of which the culprit rushed from the room. The burning coal had set fire to his jacket. Another evening the door of the room was driven open with a bang that turned every eye to it in an instant, and in the doorway appeared a short, slender, withered, vicious-looking woman, whose face, however, was in great measure concealed by the projecting and overlapping antecedents of her mutch, into which, in her indignation, she had thrust her head too far as she started on a holy crusade to deliver her darling boy from our polluted and heretical precincts. Pausing for a moment, to make sure of her aim, she dashed forward toward the boy, who was sitting immediately in front of me, and began drumming on his pericranium most fiercely: an operation which the youth clearly disrelished, for he bolted on the first administration. So completely was the woman blinded with passion that several times she brought down her arm on the spot where she thought the head should have been, before she discovered it was gone. I had raised my hand to clap her on the shoulder, and, if possible, smooth down her wrath; but the appearance of her nails was not encouraging, and, judging that non-intervention was the best policy in the circumstances, I remained silent. She was pale and panting with rage and excitement. She went out in true court fashion, back foremost, pouring out on the whole batch of us, as she withdrew, her

malisons gratis. She never noticed me, and I believe never suspected me of being in any way connected with this sacrilegious hymn-singing. Her head-gear partially concealed her features, so that I could not be absolutely certain of the identity ; but there is not a doubt on my mind that that very woman had sat at my feet in the Dispensary, listening to Gospel truth in a far more concentrated form than it was here given to her son.

That session closed with a splendid concert and soirée, which was held in the hall of Bell's Wynd School. About 120 Arabs sat down to tea, and a few ladies and gentlemen honoured us with their presence. It was one of the most interesting nights I have ever spent in the Cowgate. My beloved friend Miss Mercer, although far from well, suffering even then from the malady that at length introduced her to glory, joyfully helped us on the occasion, and contributed largely to the success of the meeting. The boys behaved admirably, and encouraged us to hope that something might be made of them, could we only get fair play amongst them with the Word of God, ministered in the love of the Gospel. Dr. Elmslie, who had gone to Kashmir, wrote to me from his new quarters, and sent to his former pupils, some ten of whom were present, kind and suitable messages. These were duly delivered with appropriate comments, and were listened to with much attention. There were no speeches, nor what could be called addresses ; but when occasion offered, I gave a word

of counsel or warning—some of the warnings not uncalled for, as I learned at the close of the meeting. One of the juveniles, true to his Ishmaelitish instincts, slipped a saucer into his pocket, and no doubt chuckled over his success, as no notice was taken at the time of what he had done, although he had been observed. But before pronouncing the benediction, I made the following intimation : “ There is a boy here imagines himself clever enough to put a saucer in his pocket without my knowing it. The joke is all spoiled, for the boy was seen. You can place the saucer on the lobby table as you go out.” To our astonishment we found five saucers. There were more culprits than one ; but each, supposing himself the individual addressed, delivered up his article as he went out.

Although there was a good deal of interest connected with this work amongst the boys, I could not regard it as a profitable expenditure of effort. Besides, the pecuniary outlay was very considerable ; so much so, indeed, that I did not feel justified in repeating it, and so for twelve months I had no meetings with them. We were kept so busy in the Cowgate, and so many demands were made on our resources, that we could continue no movement amongst these lads, how much soever it might amuse, interest, or even humanize, unless we had an honest conviction that, under the Divine blessing, it was fitted to be fruitful in the ingathering of souls to God. Far from depreciating humanizing influences, we strove, in every direction, to throw them around these youths ;

but at the same time we felt that our end was never realized till the boy was made one with the Man Christ Jesus. Fruit of this description I could not expect in very rich abundance from the efforts of the winter, and so they were not repeated. What, then, was to be done? I could not answer that question. My wisdom was all used up; but He who sent His Son, not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance, opened up my way.

I went one morning round the Grassmarket at rather an early hour. The morning was cold and windy, and one or two youngsters were standing, half-naked, barefooted, and shivering, at the close mouths. My instinctive impulse was to send them to the Dispensary to get something warm, and the thought began to dawn upon me: "Could I not get the Arabs to breakfast instead of tea?" The Grassmarket and Cowgate were peaceful and quiet as the grave, and there would be no fear of the disturbances outside that used to harass us. It seemed worthy of a trial. The young missionaries entered most heartily into the movement; the servants also very cheerfully undertook to prepare the substantial comforts; and to my great joy the Arabs began to pour in upon us, till the number ranged from seventy to eighty. We were obliged to begin a process of elimination. Some were far too well clad for us, and we resolved to stick to the pure Arab; some were too young, and we wished boys and young men. This process went on, and we hoped in time to have the boys of such an age and

such a genuine breed as should leave nothing in these particulars to be desired. The classes met every Sabbath morning at nine o'clock, and were taught by the missionary students in various rooms of the Institution. This work was entirely voluntary ; but any student taking up a class must look after the boys during the week—must act toward them in such a way as to make them feel that in their teacher they have a friend most heartily willing to help them. This aid was extended in every conceivable way ; but I advert only to one of the forms it assumed. Those who were so far back with their education that they were ashamed to go to a night school were taught here during four evenings in the week, to prepare them to enter school with lads of their own age, but more advanced in learning. In these week day classes two prizes were offered : one for punctuality, and one for cleanliness—clean hands, clean face, and trimmed hair.

When our operations commenced, it was truly bewildering to witness the youths at breakfast. Each one seemed to tremble lest there should not be enough, and the rapidity with which the viands went out of sight involved a mystery to me inexplicable. It is sheer nonsense what we are taught at college about the process of mastication, salivation, deglutition, and so forth. No such thing. Food vanisheth. As I rubbed my eyes and gazed into the empty plates, all I could say of the food, after the most careful scrutiny, amounted to this—it was, and is not. I utterly pro-

tested against all processes, except the process of disappearance.

But now let me give a few passages, as diversified in character as possible, from the memoranda furnished me by the missionary students who affectionately taught them the precious truths of the Gospel: "One of my boys, though the snow was three or four inches deep (it was January) on the ground, was without shoes or stockings. On asking him if he had any, he said, 'Ay, they were ben the house, but I couldna' stay to put them on, for I thocht I would be ower late.'" Another student says, in March: "Two of my Arab youths come from Portobello rather than lose their breakfast and lessons. Their father (who is dumb) supports himself by selling articles in the street. He lived formerly in J——'s lodgings, and left last week for Portobello.¹ I felt much for the elder boy; for though there is fully half an inch of snow on the roads, he came all the way from Portobello barefooted, early enough to be here at 9 a.m." "I spoke to one of my boys who always sleeps in the class, and asked why he did so; he told me his sad story. His mother died thirteen years ago, and since that time his unnatural father has forsaken him. He endeavours, by carrying parcels for passengers at the railway station, to pick up as much as suffices, but barely suffices, to keep soul and body together, and for the last ten weeks he has not en-

¹ Three miles off.

joyed the luxury of a bed." "The ignorance that prevailed amongst these boys was almost incredible. One of my pupils knew nothing whatever about God or Christ, and declared his parents never told him anything about them. When God seemed such a stranger in his home, I ventured to ask if he ever heard the devil's name. 'Mony's the time, sir.'" "I was going down to my class, one Sabbath morning, when one of my boys somewhat bashfully came to me with a message from one of my old pupils, who has lately gone to Glasgow. It was a kind inquiry about my health, and stating that he had got good work and was behaving well. After our brief talk I went into the room, cheered with the hope that some good was being done by our work amongst these outcast lads. The great work before the teacher is the salvation of those who are under his care ; but if we are enabled to make them more thoughtful and kindlier than before, our labour is not altogether lost. This, I think, is being done Sabbath by Sabbath in our different classes." Another student says : "At the commencement of our effort among the boys, the attendance at my class was very fluctuating. Now I have on an average about ten young men every Sabbath morning, from fifteen to twenty-five years of age. The appearance of the lads bespeaks their need of the softening influence of Gospel teaching. Meanly clad and poorly housed, wandering about sometimes a whole day without tasting food, growing up, in the majority of cases at least, without a father's or mother's

love, with few to speak a kind word to them about the loving Saviour, no one wonders that these young lads soon become familiar with vice in its lowest forms. Their behaviour in the class is all that could be desired. With one or two exceptions, they can all read; a few show considerable acquaintance with New Testament history. We all kneel during prayer, and a company of more devout worshippers, judging from the outward appearance, one could scarcely find anywhere."

Let me say emphatically these boys *must be taught*. Though we should foolishly leave them alone, still they *must be taught*, and *taught, too*, at our expense. If Christianity stand aloof, then they fall under the moral discipline of "the police"; and an education more costly or more demoralizing is not to be met with on this earth. It is a costly thing to pay police officers to hunt the youths from crime to crime, judges to condemn them, drunken drum-majors to flog them, governors and warders to guard them, not to mention chaplains, teachers, food and clothing, all paid for out of our pockets. A little kindness, suitably administered, might at least help to make good citizens of them; and what a saving to our pockets, not to speak of the comfort to our hearts! One day, when coming down Anderson's Close, I met one of our wildest quondam Arabs, well dressed and respectable looking in his appearance, with the mallet under his arm, going to his work. He is now a journeyman mason, and doing well; and this is not a solitary case.

There was an aspect of these breakfasts that did not present itself to my mind when they began, but which gave me no little joy. I know to a certainty that many of our boys had a hard struggle during the week to scrape together enough to keep the life in—they stole or begged, held a horse, ran a message, or sold fusees at railway stations and theatres ; but on Sabbath, alas ! almost every source of income was dried up, and what should have been the brightest was to many of them the darkest day of the week. It seemed to me, when I saw them enjoy their warm, substantial, comfortable meal, as if a gleam of sunshine from Calvary had been let in upon their dismal day ; and to many of them its complexion was entirely changed. Some of them never forgot it the whole week ; and the more during the six working days they were pinched with cold or hunger, the more frequent and the more cheerful were their thoughts regarding it. They began to have pleasing associations with the holy Sabbath, and our Scripture lessons were not less likely to be appreciated that they had a preface attractive and intelligible even to humble capacities. Very little can be said about results ; the truth is, we have no wonderful results to record. We laboured in great measure for the privilege we at length enjoyed of making known to them, in quietness, the Gospel of salvation. The little we were able to do in that direction was not altogether unproductive.

“Ye shall reap if ye faint not.”

These boys are certainly not insensible to kindness. In truth, sometimes they exhibit very interesting traits of character, and constrain us to believe that if they got fair play something could be made of them. One evening, my partner in these Cowgate labours found herself at the top of a stair which was crowded with young ruffians, who were in a state of no inconsiderable excitement, and presented to a lady an aspect anything but encouraging. In her perplexity one of our young Arabs noticed her. His arm was broken, poor lad ! but, nothing daunted, he forced his way up some steps, and drawing himself up to his full stature in front of my wife, he exclaimed, " I'll take care of you, mistress. Come on ! Come on ! " And on he went, brandishing his splints, and clearing a way with his sound member till he deposited the lady, with an air of triumph, safe and sound in the Dispensary. Was there not good stuff there to work upon ? Had I been blessed with the pencil of Wilkie, I should have made the scene immortal of the young Cowgate Arab defending the missionary lady. Another time, coming to the Sabbath evening meeting, a young rascal came behind my wife to play some prank upon her ; but he was detected by a band of our boys, who raised such a storm of warning outcries that he fled in mortal terror up the nearest close. But it is not necessary to multiply these indications of good feeling.

Here is something of a different character, but still more acceptable. One Sabbath morning, after

instruction in their separate rooms, all were assembled in the chapel and a very short address delivered. A beautiful little card was given to each, on which were the three petitions: Lord, show me myself; Lord, show me Thyself; Give me Thy Holy Spirit. On coming out, a lad about nineteen years of age laid hold of me and drew me aside to speak with me. I incontinently plunged my hand with nervous energy to the bottom of my breeches pocket to shelter my finance, and grumbled out half audibly, "What'll you be wanting?" They were very troublesome with begging, and I was annoyed at the thought of an application on the first morning. After looking about, to make sure we were alone, he drew me close to him and whispered in my ear, "I just wanted to tell you, doctor, I can't help thinking but that Jesus Christ has been kind to my soul!" Many a rebuke I have got in this work, and here was one. I bowed my head in silence. Looking up and glimmering through my tears, I gazed on the strange-looking concern before me. Never, even in old Ireland, where rags are prolific, have I seen such a scarecrow. There was only a fragment of a vest, about six inches square, held on by a string; but it was large enough to contain his New Testament. The jacket was a mere caricature. Round his loins a leathern girdle held together various tufts of rags. The trowsie hair, the indefinitely dirty face, scanty, filthy linen, bits of stockings about his ankles, and his feet expatiating in what we Scotch folk call "bachels," presented a

tout ensemble, at which I gazed long. At length, thrusting my hearing ear close up to his mouth, I said, "What is it, my man?" "I just wanted to tell you," he replied, "that Christ has been kind to my soul!" "And so," murmured I to myself, "a thing like this has a soul!" Precious lesson at the beginning of winter's work! Let not readers imagine that this is paraded as a striking case of conversion. Far from it. This only would I impress: that, despite our thoughtlessness and our unbelief, even these creatures, whom one might shrink from thrusting out of his way for fear of pollution, have souls; and Jesus may be kind to them. The incident brought home to me with power the two grand truths of a missionary sermon I had recently heard; and they are the two grand lessons of my missionary life: none too low to be beyond the Saviour's care; and none too vile to be beyond the Saviour's grace.'

CHAPTER XI

HOME IN THE COWGATE

AFTER earnestly seeking God's guidance, we resolved in the summer of 1866 to live in the Cowgate, or at least to make the trial. As I had lived there before my marriage, it was for my wife I felt what the change would be after our home in the Meadows.

All our friends, instead of encouraging this change, which to me seemed most essential, conjured up many sorts of difficulties and disadvantages. The locality was so unhealthy ; the approach so filthy ; your mind will never be off the strain ; if your wife should die, you will get the credit of dragging her into the Cowgate to her grave, etc., etc. No doubt there was self-denial in going to live in that district ; but the Lord seemed to be guiding, and for our sakes " He became poor."

A good deal of preparation was made for our descent. My wife bargained only for perfect cleanliness and a gate at the end of the close or alley leading to the Dispensary. The following sketch sent to friends abroad will show how the premises were being enlarged :—

"We are certainly lengthening our cords, and we

trust the stakes also are being strengthened. The original Dispensary, the old dram shop, remains very much the same ; but there is now some danger of its being eclipsed, as it is surrounded with buildings larger and better than itself, which form part of the Protestant Institute. You'll remember the stair on the left hand in the Dispensary close, leading to the tenement that stretches along over the Dispensary. That house, consisting of eight good rooms and two attics, has been nicely fitted up, and is now occupied by nine students and a housekeeper. The back court, which used to be a playground, and a source of great annoyance to us from its constant din and dirt, is now in our hands. This court has direct access to the street, and admits of being closed by an iron gate ; while the amenity of the place is greatly enhanced by a plot of grass, which Mrs. Ranyard, from London, has styled the 'Green Pastures,' and a tidy gravel walk with an open outlook to the east. Altogether the place has a cheerful aspect, which is the more pleasing from being unexpected in such a locality.

"The old prescribing room is now added to the apothecary's shop. This admits of the patients being supplied with their medicines at once : a greatly improved arrangement. The old waiting-room is to be fitted up as a bedroom and sitting apartment for an additional nurse, who may also do good service as a Bible-woman among the sick at their own houses. The 'loft' above this back Dispensary, where we used to stow away our lumber and make boxes for

Madagascar, etc., has been divided into two unequal parts. The western division has been made to form a splendid dining hall, and that to the east has been fitted up into one of the sweetest, tidiest little prophet's chambers ever got up since the days of Elijah. You can fancy what a welcome you will get to it when you come home to rest. Our own home lies to the west of the court. It did not look very enticing a few months ago.

"The first servant we took to look at it threw up her situation on the spot. 'Don't be discouraged,' I said; 'we are to make it clean and tidy, and you will find it very nice.' 'You'll never find me there,' was her curt reply. 'But we are to put it in such order that I am going to bring my wife here to live.' 'You can do with your wife as you like, but you'll never get me to live there.'¹

"The rickety old building to the east of the court, which fronts our windows, and which ought long ago to have been pulled down, as utterly unfit for human habitation, is now also in our hands. When I came first to live here, it was one of the vilest dens in the city. Between Saturday night and Sunday morning, there was no possibility of an hour's sleep for the noise. The yells and shrieks of murder were terrible to hear. The wretched creatures, after mauling and

¹ Servants always constituted a very serious difficulty while we lived at 39. Respectable women feared that to live in Cowgate would be against their ever getting another situation.

smashing each other before our very eyes, would actually come round to the Dispensary for me to mend their broken bones.

“Our beloved convener, Mr. Craigie, who saw how matters stood, rented the house himself, had it cleared out, and handed over the key to me. The Lord reward him for his generous kindness! When first we broke ground in this district, our rent was £20, now it is £82 per annum. So much for the premises. The occupants at present amount to twenty-one—ten students, three doctors, five Biblewomen-nurses, two servants, and mistress.

“I am astonished that any of you in the foreign field should express surprise at our coming to live here. Assuredly we fare better than you. Our home is a palace compared with what some of you have been living in. But truly we are here, not because we desire to occupy a humble dwelling, but because the work demanded our presence. I had no choice but to make the attempt in consequence of the experience of last winter.”

After an absence of five years, Dr. Davidson, one of my first pupils, returned from Madagascar, and took up his abode for a time in his old home—as he affectionately called it, “dear old 39.” In a paper on his work abroad, he gives, by way of preface, his impressions of the Cowgate as he found it.

“I naturally directed my returning steps to the Cowgate, full to me of the tenderest associations of work and study in past days, and happiest memories

of prayerful struggles for the advancement of the infant mission. The first thing that struck me was the enlargement and improvement of the premises ; the comparative quiet, cleanliness, and comfort prevailing ; the greater facilities for examining the sick and prescribing for them by means of the staff of nurses, of visiting and helping them in their desolate homes. It is not the premises alone that are altered, but many old features of the work have become wondrously developed, and new ones have been added.

“Above all, I remark that, when I left, it was chiefly a Mission Dispensary ; now it is a Medical Missionary Training Institution.

“I did not come from Madagascar to see it ; but having come for other reasons, the sight has been wonderfully cheering, and would well repay the trouble of a long journey.”

It was a great comfort to me that the Directors were alive to the importance of our Cowgate residence. I always looked upon this step myself as a turning-point in the history of modern medical missions.

I quote from E.M.M.S. Report :—

“We begin this year in circumstances of peculiar interest and hopefulness. An arrangement, long regarded by our superintendent as indispensable to the proper working of the Mission, has at length been accomplished. Mr. Burns Thomson and his lady have taken up their residence on the spot, so that the In-

stitution is no longer a lodging, but really a *home* to the young men under our care. In deference to the feelings of our friends, we shall not enlarge upon the importance of this step which they have taken ; but we feel confident that the Christian public will not be slow to help, in every way, a cause in which so much personal devotedness is exhibited ; and, in short, that no help will be withheld which Mr. and Mrs. Thomson may deem of importance for the furtherance of their work. Above all, let the prayers of God's people ascend in their behalf, that they may be guided, prospered, and protected in the delicate and difficult, and often dangerous, position which they are now honoured to occupy.

“Already around their family board there gather the resident assistant, Dr. Macdowal, Mr. Vartan, and nine young missionary students, representing almost every evangelical denomination — Episcopalian, Methodist, United Presbyterian, Free Church, Established Church, Congregational, Baptist—a striking evidence of the truly catholic constitution of our Society!”

We came down to live in the Cowgate in fear and trembling ; but the Lord took the lions out of the way ; and at the end of a year, in spite of the cholera's immediate appearance, I could say that we had both been marvellously preserved in health, and helped in our various duties. My wife had stood it splendidly, and though working hard, like all in the Institution, was as active and happy as possible.

CHAPTER XII

THE PLAGUE

AS mentioned before, my wife and I came in the summer of 1866 to live in the Cowgate. There had been serious difficulty and delay in fixing the date at which to make the change, as the cholera was threatening us. Month by month its appearance was delayed, and as not a single case fitted to cause uneasiness made its appearance, we resolved "to flit." This we did on a Monday. Tuesday was spent in arranging the furniture, so far as time and strength would permit; and as the ordinary Dispensary work had in any case to go on, it had been an exhausting day. Next day, Wednesday, down came the plague upon us like a thunderclap, and the end of the week found us with cases of cholera on three sides, as close as they could be. In one case, the window of the room in which the sufferer lay was so close to our bedroom window that, had both been opened, we could almost shake hands across.

On that Wednesday afternoon I was summoned to an urgent case in 27, Cowgate. The room was smaller than a prison cell, and I had some difficulty in worming my way round to the bed (the only one),

where I found a man of about forty struggling in what seemed his death-agony. Three miserably ill-clad children cowered and shivered round the empty grate. The mother, half-drunk, winked and muttered nonsense. She fondled an infant in her arms, as naked as when born, except that a fragment of old carpet was pinned round its neck. It was an awful scene !

After ministering as far as possible to the temporal necessities of the household, I asked the man if he was able to think about his soul and eternity. "Oh, Doctor," he cried, "I can think of nothing but my pain." I could only drop one short verse of Divine truth into his ear, and follow it with a cry for mercy to the compassionate Saviour. I went thence to a house in Gilmore Close, where I found a poor woman still worse than the patient I had left. There was not a shadow of hope of her recovering. In the same bed, and under the bedclothes, with the poison diffused around them, slept her two children. I remonstrated with the attendants—neighbours—for allowing such a piece of cruelty ; and the children were placed in a corner of the room.

I came home to my wife, who waited my return trembling, and told her that the plague in a well-marked form had at last come upon us. It is needless to say that we went together to our Heavenly Father, to plead that He would graciously spread over us His covering wings.

At this juncture, I was in great difficulty about

nurses. My own were very nervous and afraid of this terrible malady, and I feared to use them in connection with it. My assistant, Dr. Macdowal, was most helpful to me, and I shall ever gratefully remember his services. In the evening I was obliged to go to No. 27, to nurse the poor man myself, till the wife should be sufficiently sobered down to be able to carry out instructions. I tried to get the children removed; but it was too late, for the infant was already sick. I turned up a table, and made a bed for it within the rails, and did my best to smooth its pathway into the grave.

On entering No. 27, on Thursday morning, I found the other inmates of the tenement in a state of great excitement and alarm.

I went into their rooms with disinfectants, and my apparent coolness was helpful in quieting them; but they complained bitterly that the sufferers were not removed. I found the sick man a shade better, but the infant very ill. Through the exertions of a helper, Mrs. Anderson, I got a woman to sit up on Thursday night. The man had again got worse. On Friday forenoon, I found one of the little girls fretting with the mother, on account of something withheld from her. A few hours later, she was deep in collapse. The scene was deplorable! The father still lived, writhing about on his bed. The infant lay on the top of a trunk, and the girl on the floor, with her head at the side of the fire. When I saw her in her prostrate state, she was stark naked. Soon some

clothing and a small palliasse were sent up, and we did the best we could in the circumstances.

Next night Mrs. Anderson sat up with the sufferers, which was a great comfort to me, as she was a pious and intelligent woman. That night a third child was struck down; and as it was impossible to put them into the bed with the father, on account of his restlessness, we made temporary provision for them on the floor. The room was so dark, even at mid-day, that we could not examine our patients without a candle, and the place was so small that it was impossible, in passing from one to another, to go round them—we were compelled just to step over them! It was *literally* walking amongst the dying. On Monday, the first after our flitting, when leaving the Dispensary to get a whiff of fresh air, one of the nurses we had hired for this emergency came to complain that the besotted mother was interfering with her in the discharge of her duties. I told her to go into my house for a moment, and promised to put all right when I came back. Before my return, alas! she had broken down, and I found she had been carried to No. 27, and stretched beside her patients on that fatal floor. She never rallied. Next day the Hospital was opened, and we were practically free.

Though I have confined my remarks almost exclusively to this household, because it was the worst that came under my notice, yet others were being struck down in different parts of the district. From

the moment the first case appeared, I pressed the authorities to open the Hospital. The cause of delay I could not understand. My pleadings, I may say, were incessant, and very painful to myself in their urgency.

On the Saturday morning when I found the third child smitten, I could stand it no longer, but sent a letter by special messenger to the Lord Provost. This brought matters to a crisis, and I speedily had the assurance that action would be taken at once for the removal of the patients.

As the disease spread, my wife became very uneasy, especially so when, one night, a most painful and indescribable sensation of prostration overcame me, the outcome of the severe physical and mental strain. Vainly I struggled against it. Could I have fainted, it would have been a relief. In anguish my poor wife poured out her heart to the Lord for mercy. It was very distressing, but I refer to it chiefly because it was so *profitable*! The flames of a heated furnace oft-times burn up the Christian's bonds, and let him see deeper into the Father's faithfulness and love. We were just entering on a delicate and difficult service, and we were called to contemplate it from the confines of Eternity, where we saw it in its true bearings. How little we realize that the salvation through Jesus, which we wished to make known in the district and spread abroad through the earth, brings deliverance from an eternal hell and a title to eternal glory! As we stood, with quickened conscience, during that

solemn season, and gazed down the endless ages, the magnificent grandeur of our work appeared as it had never done before; whilst those things usually esteemed amongst men dwindled into nothingness. We learned the unutterable preciousness of the Blood of the Lamb, and how to estimate sacrifice on the part of a ransomed soul. What were the afflictions springing even from a Cowgate campaign, when set beside an *eternal* weight of glory! Such lessons, at such a season, seemed to us like oil poured on a machine at its starting, that it might work the more smoothly. "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee."

CHAPTER XIII

CONVALESCENT HOMES

“**T**O be useful is to be noble,” writes Florence Nightingale, “and I cannot conceive a much more useful work than a Convalescent Home. My whole experience tends to convince me that if every hospital, every workhouse, and every town had its convalescent home by the seaside, or among the heather hills, nothing would more conduce to the health of the population, or to the diminution of pauperism, by restoring the hardworking to homes and work, and by preventing whole families from becoming a burden on the rates.”

Coming to a district like the Cowgate, where the mass of those amongst whom I laboured were ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-housed, and often cruelly ill-used, I found the ordinary “simples” of our *Materia Medica*, the “calamy and laudamy,” not altogether suited to my benevolent aims, and the necessity of a Convalescent Home was many a time forced on me with great urgency.

Sometimes, in desperation, I made spasmodic efforts to meet special cases; but these were very troublesome, very expensive, and usually very un-

satisfactory. Suitable places could not be found just when needed, or if we got the right place there would be other difficulties, and then the trouble and expense made it impossible to overtake more than two or three cases per annum.

In addition to those recovering from acute diseases or from accidents who needed a change, there were many other decent, worthy persons, always struggling with enfeebled bodies, for whom a breath of country air would do infinitely more than doctor's stuff. This class were for ever dropping in upon me for something to strengthen them. Nothing very definite was the matter, yet their limbs were feeble, their appetites weak, their spirits drooping, their tempers irritable, their work a drudgery; and when only a very moderate trial came on them in this broken, enfeebled state, it so grasped them that they could not shake it off. It made them its puppet and plaything; and the home of weakness and poverty became too often the abode of strife and wretchedness, if not despair. How frequently are sufferers in such circumstances tempted to betake themselves to drink, to drown their sorrows! Every district visitor must know the intimate connection there is between the physical and the moral in the homes of the poor. What a boon to lift the drooping, sorrowing, suffering ones out of their miseries, and for a time to bless them with pure, fresh air, cleanliness, kindness, and comfort!

One evening at a small party in Elie, Fife, having

opened up my heart, much as I have just written, and poured forth my longings, a lady present offered for one season, by way of a trial, to bear the whole expense of a small house, and thus my dream was realized. I find it hard to refrain from uttering a word of praise here ; but knowing that my silence in this matter will be pleasing, I only quote the words of the apostle : "She hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also."

A house was rented in the village of Elie for June, July, August, and September, and one of my own nurses went to take charge. Suitable patients were selected in groups of three or four, and the time allowed for each was fourteen days, though there were exceptions. In the first party there was a nice girl, whose limb had shortly before been amputated, who got six or seven weeks, and one very delicate lad got ten. One invalid woman needed fully half an hour to walk from the Dispensary to the Railway Station, supported by a nurse ; in fourteen days she came spanking up quite briskly all the way from Leith. A little girl, who was dwining away in spite of all our remedial appliances, was sent to the "land of Goshen," as we called the Home, and she came back to gambol about the Cowgate-head as vigorous and blithe as a lambkin. That was the physic for Cowgate invalids ! I trust we shall have more of it next season, was my natural exclamation.

Difficulties and annoyances too we had in carrying out that modest experiment, but on the whole it was

a success, and the experience acquired was useful ever after. Two points deserve notice. Much care was needed in selecting and classifying the patients, and much of the value of the Home, both physically and spiritually, depended on the character of the nurse who was in charge. The kind lady who bore the expense, and took a loving supervision of the Home, writing in October, says, "I think the scheme as a whole has been most successful, and no money I ever spent has given me more thorough satisfaction."

A notice of this effort in *Elie*, published in my *Journal*, stirred the hearts of Christian ladies in East Lothian, and I had the offer of a splendid mansion there for a Convalescent Home. It was soon found expedient to give up the grand house, but it was not easy to get another possessing all the requisites desiderated. With Dr. Elmslie, who was home at the time from Kashmir, I arranged an exploring expedition, and well do I recall the encouragement I received that morning, on turning to "*Daily Light on the Daily Path*," to find the verse, "The Lord your God went in the way before you to choose you out a place to pitch your tent in."

We soon found a most suitable house at Polton, on one of the sunny braes to the south of Lasswade, well sheltered from the north and east wind, and not too far from the railway station. The house was taken on lease, and dwellers in the neighbourhood got the assurance that no infectious cases would be sent to it. The rent was paid for me in full by the ladies of

East Lothian. The necessary furnishings were provided, and I received also an annual grant towards the working expenses, so that I only needed aid for the support of the patients. The whole internal arrangements and furnishings were of the simplest character possible. "I would like them," said our Elie friend, "to be comfortable and have things full, but I think it would be no true kindness to give them luxuries that would make them discontented with their own homes." Their food was plain and substantial, but sometimes they got what they considered a treat, through the kindness of friends in the neighbourhood sending a supply of rabbits. This Home was opened on June 5th, 1870, and shortly after there was what we termed a house-warming, when a number of our friends came to see the premises, fittings, etc. In the afternoon refreshments were served in front of the house under the shade of the trees. Some appropriate hymns were sung, and the Rev. Mr. Martin, missionary from Rajputana, engaged in prayer, commending the Home and all its inmates to Him who promises His blessing to those that "Consider the poor."

The number of patients sent out that first summer between June 5th and October 20th was 109. The shortest stay of any patient was ten days, the longest sixteen weeks. The average was about three weeks.

The following year—that is from October to October—the number benefited was 207 ; special

cases being retained according to their need, sometimes for five or six months. An examination of the monthly accounts made it very patent that the Home was proportionately most expensive at the time it was least useful and most difficult to manage—viz., in the winter. As my desire was to do the greatest possible good with the least possible outlay that was compatible with efficiency, I resolved to shut up the house during the winter season.

The Home was always a mixed Home—men and women, boys and girls. This gave it more the real character of a home than when the sexes are apart, but it entailed much carefulness in the selection of the patients. There was one aspect of this retreat that greatly encouraged me—viz., the elevating influence it had upon those who enjoyed its benefits. They were brought so near us, and the relationship was so fraught with kindliness, that they came to look on themselves as in some way connected with us, and that made them ashamed to do anything unworthy of the new relation. The matron and I both felt that new ties were formed between us and these patients, deeper and more tender than those that subsisted between us and the common run of Dispensary patients, and of course our influence over them for good was all the greater, and consequently our responsibility to deal faithfully and tenderly with their souls.

There was no servant in the Home. Six servants could not have managed it ; but we got on capitally without any servant at all. This, of course, was a de-

termining element in selecting the patients—weak enough it might be when they entered the Home, but likely soon to brace up so as to be able to lend a helping hand. When the working power was low, the matron was free to call in a charwoman to undertake the heavy work, it being a condition of the matron's appointment that she was to do no scrubbing herself. She was the mother at the head of a large and poor family, every member of which, according to ability, was expected to aid in keeping the house clean and comfortable, and also in keeping down the expense.

Manifold were the kindnesses shown by friends to add to the comfort and the enjoyment of the patients. A great source of enjoyment to the patients, especially the youngsters, was an invalid carriage that had been provided with shafts for a donkey. I mentioned to some friends, when at tea one evening, that an animal of that description would be a great acquisition, and was not a little surprised and gratified to receive a note shortly after from the lady who had entertained me, to say that she and her other guests on that occasion had contributed sufficient to purchase what they jocularly called "a sensible ass." I could not venture to say that we got what was desiderated, "a sensible ass," but we certainly got a very useful one, and every day, Sabbath excepted, it ministered to the enjoyment of young and old.

I cannot speak too gratefully of the kind friends who put it in our power to have an abundant supply of milk. We discovered that six patients required one

shillingsworth of milk per day. This was alarming! How could we ever supply thirty patients a day? A cow was indispensable, and we got a cow! A kind friend gave me twenty guineas to get a cow *for myself*. It was a gift to myself, and I felt that peculiarly tender on the part of my Heavenly Father. I was so ignorant of the management proper for such a creature that, had it been presented to the Home, I should constantly have been uneasy lest any evil should befall it; but as it was my own, to kill or to keep alive, I had no uneasy thoughts, and had the luxury of feeling that the invalids daily got abundance of milk at a moderate rate. "He is pitiful and of tender mercy." Then such milk it was! One urchin who had seen some eight winters—we say winters, for the idea of sunshine had never lit up his dreary path—exclaimed, as he sipped the delicious beverage, "Mrs. Fairlie, that's no câk (chalk) an' water." No! we got the genuine article direct from the fountain formed by a beneficent Creator. But cows don't pour out their streams ceaselessly; they run dry. And what then? God put it into the heart of His servant, the possessor of a farm to the west of Edinburgh, to take the management of the valuable creature into his own hands. At the close of the season, when its supplies were becoming scanty, he took the cow to his farm, and kept it there during the winter at his own expense, and in spring sent it back again to pour forth streams of refreshment for our poor invalids. Not only so, but one season, when the animal began to fail prema-

turely, he took it away and sent us another to fill its place, whose supply was more commensurate with our needs. We joyfully transfer to this good friend a bountiful share of the blessings that have been poured upon us in connection with the precious retreat ; for what would the Home have been without the cow ?

It is needless to say that the spiritual interests of the patients were not uncared for. Besides morning and evening worship, the Rev. Mr. Muir and the Rev. Mr. Hamilton, Established and Free Church ministers of Cockpen, conducted a prayer-meeting on alternate Wednesdays amongst the patients, and in other ways interested themselves in their welfare. It was arranged that one of the missionary students or myself should spend the Sabbath at the Home, and seek to turn to profit the precious opportunities thus afforded for personal dealing with the inmates. This worked well, and proved beneficial to us as well as to them. In 1873 God was very manifestly working amongst us by the Holy Spirit, and we could say confidently that " This one and that one was born there."

Much did we rejoice to learn that a youth who got blessing to his soul in the Home was the means, on his return to town, of awakening an interest in Divine things amongst his companions in one of the large institutions of the city, and that the good work went on deepening and widening till many came to rejoice in Christ. Fain would I give samples of cases benefited, but they were so numerous, they would fill volumes.

“ Please accept my sincere thanks,” writes a city missionary, “ for the many known to me who have been largely benefited by a residence in your Sanatorium at Polton.” Meeting one day a minister from whose flock many of our patients came, he accosted me somewhat abruptly thus : “ Thomson, I fear that Home of yours is in danger of falling under the CURSE ! ” I could only gaze bewildered, and gasp for an explanation, wondering what frightful thing had happened. He said softly, in answer to my perplexed and inquiring look, “ ‘ Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you.’ Apply that to the Home,” he added, “ for it is doing a real work ” ; then hurried off, leaving me to readjust my disturbed respiration.

For some thirty years I ministered kindness in one form or other to the poor in the city of Edinburgh. There was no description of missionary or philanthropic appliance for their benefit that I had heard of that I did not put to the test. These appliances varied much in value. I learned that all such agencies had a *debit* as well as a *credit* side ; and sometimes the balance was on one side, sometimes on the other. For example, the first two years I laboured amongst the city Arabs the balance was all on the wrong side—we did more harm than good. Some of the plans we tried were of doubtful value. In the Dispensary work there was always a clear gain to the cause of truth. In my little Hospital the percentage rose higher still, but the Convalescent Home stood highest of all. It yielded a clear profit

of from seventy to eighty per cent., and this I consider a first-class investment, better even than the "Tharsis Sulphur and Copper Mine." The security, too, is unquestionable!—"Two Immutable Things"; and that the poorest even may not be excluded from the advantages of so profitable a speculation, "two mites" will be duly registered, and will come in for a glorious dividend.

CHAPTER XIV

NAZARETH

DR. VARTAN was one of the foreign students trained by the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society. After a thorough professional education he left this country in the autumn of 1861 to establish himself in Syria, having received a grant of £100 and an outfit from the Syrian Asylum Fund to aid him at the commencement of his work. Shortly after his arrival at Beyrout he received an invitation to Nazareth, which he gladly accepted, and there he has since laboured.

“I started,” he says, “by entrusting myself and my work to Him in whose vineyard I desired to labour for life.” That confidence in his Heavenly Master was not disappointed. Year by year, through the kindness of his friend, the Rev. Mr. Birch, the Syrian Asylum Committee renewed the grant of £100. ‘But now,” he writes in 1864, “my friend Mr. Birch is no more, and as I understand the Syrian Asylum Committee is entirely dissolved, I do not know in what circumstances I may be placed during the ensuing year ; but I am sure of this, ‘the Lord will provide.’”

The above was published in the January number

of the *Medical Missionary Circular*, 1865, and led to inquiries on the part of sympathising friends. Instead of attempting to answer them, I sent these queries to the Rev. Mr. Zeller, the Church Mission Society's missionary at Nazareth. I give extracts from his reply: "Some of your friends may be interested to hear about the state of things here, so as to recognise more fully the need of a doctor located in so small a place as Nazareth (population about 5,000). The medical missionary has not to confine his labours to the patients of Nazareth only, but it must be distinctly understood that Dr. Vartan is the only medical man in the north of Palestine, for there is no other educated physician between Jerusalem and Beyrout.¹ Nazareth lies in the centre of Galilee, and the towns of Caiffa, Acca, Tiberias, and Safed are an easy day's journey distant. Besides these larger places there are twenty-five villages within three hours' ride.

"The sphere which is filled up in Europe by medical science is here taken up by the charlatanry of quacks, by superstitious practices, and by sorcery. The misery produced by these evils is heart-rending, and there is no other remedy than the devoted labours of a medical man. Dr. Vartan's zeal and abilities, strengthened by the experience gained during his stay here, is calculated to contribute much to the welfare of the natives.

"It must be specially remarked that the services of

¹ This is no longer the case. Ramaleh, Nablus, Gaza, Safed, and Tiberias are each supplied with a medical missionary.

a medical missionary are the best means of spreading the Gospel among the Mohammedans without offending their feelings. Dr. Vartan's experience fully proves this, and his work may be the means of opening a wider door for the Gospel among the Mohammedans of this country.

"It will doubtlessly interest you to hear that we lately received the promise of a considerable donation towards the erection of a small hospital. The ground necessary for that purpose has already been purchased, and commands the finest and most healthy situation in Nazareth.

"This will probably encourage you to assist Dr. Vartan in his work, at a place dear to every Christian on account of its close connection with the life of our Lord, who, whilst working for the salvation of souls, did not forget to heal diseases. I am, Yours, etc. (Signed), JOHN ZELLER."

These communications gave rise to much earnest prayer. I was becoming timid about introducing extension movements to the Society, seeing they were never welcomed, even though I offered to bear the pecuniary responsibility.

I felt it was due to them, however, to lay the case before them, promising, should they take it up, to do my very best to help them. The subject, when brought definitely before the committee, was duly discussed, and the Treasurer referred to; but the finances not being in a prosperous condition, the application was rejected.

As I had got an assistant in my Cowgate work as one of the fruits of the Miller Memorial Fund, I was more free than formerly to lecture ; and as lecturing was an excellent means of improving the finance, it occurred to me that if I raised the requisite £100 for two years, the Society might be encouraged to take up Nazareth for that period, and that we might confidently hope the state of the funds would be so improved by that time that there would be no difficulty about continuing Vartan at his post. I therefore set about raising the £200.

The two Circulars from which the foregoing passages are quoted, with the following explanations, were placed in the hands of a few friends. " The whole case I brought before a meeting of our Directors, desiring that they should take up Vartan as our agent, at least year by year, till they saw whether or not the public would support them. The matter was referred to the Treasurer, but as he felt constrained to present a report, *not encouraging*, my proposal was thrown aside, and so you see how Vartan is placed. I have resolved, God helping me, to raise the necessary £100 for two years, and I have reason to believe our Society will be in a better position financially by that time than it is now. I am sure it would encourage and stimulate our Directors should I succeed. At all events, in these days, when it is so difficult to get labourers to enter the foreign field to do work for Jesus, I cannot stand quietly by and see one actually in harness, in my own special department of Medical

Missions, driven from his post for the small sum of £100 per annum. No, no! The memories of self-denial and self-sacrifice that hover around Nazareth are so many and so sacred, they constrain me to make an effort."

A few responses to these communications made it plain that the needful funds could be realized, and so I presented the case again to the sub-committee, but the reception was most disheartening. Mr. C—— threw cold water upon it, and appealed to the President for support. I cannot give the words uttered, but I am sure I begged hard. I mentioned that I thought the principle of our having foreign agencies was established in the case of Bombay. In answer to an objection about funds, I said, "But surely if the Lord gives you the money, if He pours it into your hands, you will not refuse to disburse it for Him?" There was no reply, further than this: that when I said there was no fear about the money, it was remarked that I had got the Philosopher's Stone. I got that long ago, and so had they all. "Ask, and it shall be given you."

Later I brought the subject again before the general committee, and the reception was more favourable. "I tried to show them that it would help me, in going round to lecture, to be able to say that they had an agent at Nazareth. I promised that if they allowed me to hope that they would take Vartan up after two years, should I keep him floating during that time, and should the state of finance permit at that period,

that I could and would say when lecturing that *they* had an agent at Nazareth. But if they denied me that hope, I must, when speaking of it, say *I* had got an agent at Nazareth, and that I did not wish to do. They seemed to me to be a little ashamed." At the close of the meeting Mr. Craigie said he thought I could honestly count on his being taken up by the Society, and a note from the Secretary in the evening confirmed his opinion. He used these words, "I think we made a good beginning about Vartan to-day," showing plainly that he was favourable. Some time after, when finally settled, Vartan wrote to me as follows :—

"Dr. Bell has kindly informed me that at the meeting of the Directors of our Society, October 21st, 1865, they have adopted me as their agent for two years. I thank them sincerely for their generosity and their indulgence upon my past failings, whilst I acknowledge your unwearied and kind efforts in this success."

The following passage from the Report for 1865 speaks for itself :—

"It may be mentioned here, that after mature deliberation and earnest inquiry into all the circumstances of the case, your Directors lately resolved to adopt Mr. Vartan as an agent of this Society for a period of two years, at an annual salary of £100. It is gratifying to announce that the requisite sum has been already secured by a special effort, upon the understanding that if, at the end of two years, the

Directors approve of continuing the engagement with Mr. Vartan, the salary shall be supplied from the common fund of the Society. The arrangement commences on the 1st January, 1866, and it is believed that many persons will take a warmer interest in your Society when it thus begins to maintain a missionary of its own, and one already so deserving of confidence as Mr. Vartan, in the very town, and amid the very scenes, where our blessed Lord spent the earlier years of His human life."

There was no difficulty in meeting the wants of Nazareth as they fell due. In a short time, indeed, the salary was increased, as Vartan married a worthy Scotch lady, who was a great support to him in his work.

In the Society's Report for 1868 we are told of an arrangement that greatly increased the value of the mission and the doctor's influence for good amongst the sick poor :—

"The suggestion made in last Report that the furnishing of a small ward in Mr. Vartan's own house in a simple but sufficient manner would be a very important object of benevolence was speedily carried out, and we believe that eight patients might now be comfortably accommodated under his roof, were it not for the additional expense implied in maintaining them. To save time, your Superintendent advanced from his own private resources about £100 in the purchase of the needed articles. We feel confident that our friend will not be permitted to bear more than his due share of this burden."

I was helped with that advance. It is sweet to me to look back and realize that the Nazareth Mission goes on prosperously still. Surely such a result was worth an earnest effort! There is no outlay that yields such a splendid return as service or sacrifice for Jesus.

CHAPTER XV

TRAVANCORE : DR. JOHN LOWE AND HIS NATIVE STUDENTS

THE Rev. Dr. John Lowe was one of the agents of the London Missionary Society at Neyoor, South Travancore. He was a student of the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society, and one of the earliest of our friends and fellow-labourers in "dear old 39." The object of this chapter is to draw attention to an important experiment he made in connection with the training of native assistants. I give an outline of his scheme gathered from various letters in 1864: "I intend to open a class in the course of three or four weeks for young men, and I am selecting them now from the respective mission districts. We have many advantages and facilities for training young men for medical mission work: an excellent hospital erected by public subscriptions, raised by my lamented predecessor, Dr. Leitch; a well-stocked dispensary, and the prospect of funds sufficient to carry on branch dispensaries so soon as we are prepared to open them. My esteemed colleague, the Rev. Y. Baylis, has a thorough knowledge of pharmacy, and could give me efficient aid in this

department." In next month's letter he thus details his operations: "I have selected my men, seven in number, all of them most intelligent, well-educated Christian youths, first-class students at the Seminary at Nagercoil, well up in English, and able to study intelligently almost any English book you can place in their hands. Their ages vary from eighteen to twenty-two. Three have already been engaged in mission work, two as teachers and one as a catechist over a congregation. The others are fresh from their studies at the Nagercoil Institution. At first I intended to limit the number of students to three, or at most to four; but each missionary in our mission put in as strong a claim as another, so that at last I resolved to receive a student from each district in our Travancore Mission, and consequently I look forward to the time when, in connection with our Hospital at Neyoor, we shall have branch dispensaries in each mission district throughout the State. I have resolved to make each of the students sign an agreement to serve the mission for a period of at least five years after they have finished their course of training, or refund the outlay incurred on their account. To natives who have picked up even a slight knowledge of Medicine and Surgery the temptation to enter the Government employment is very great, and we consider this arrangement absolutely necessary for our own protection. I depend much on your prayers in entering on this self-imposed labour; pray for me and my young men." Such is Dr. Lowe's

scheme. He adds, "I see nothing to hinder us from entering upon this enterprise except a want of special funds for the support of the native students while prosecuting their course of study. If I had an allowance of £7 a year for each student for three years, the object so ardently to be desired would assuredly, with God's blessing, be attained."

As his own Society did not see its way to undertake the burden of the scheme, he laid a full account of it before the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society and asked them to do so, but the proposal was declined. This refusal I deplored. My Cowgate experience had taught me that these pious, educated youths, after such a professional training as Dr. Lowe and Rev. Mr. Baylis could give, would be very helpful in forwarding the cause of Christ in and around Neyoor. It was a very modest sum that was required to secure seven effective Christian native workers in that land of heathenism ; and we all know that if ever these lands are to be converted to God, it must be mainly by native agency. I therefore wrote to Dr. Lowe at once (August, 1864), and told him to go on with his class, as there would be no difficulty about the money, and added, "And then you will be absolutely free. That is a great point. In making a trial of anything new, it is important to be free to make mistakes, without having to endure the pain of the mistake and a blowing-up into the bargain. I am deeply interested in your experiment. Please let me have the names of your young men."

Dr. Lowe replied in November, 1864 : " The number of students was made up (one from each of our mission districts) the day I received your welcome letter ; and although I felt at first a little discouraged and disappointed at the unfavourable response given by the Directors (of the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society) to my application, still your cheering, sympathising comments, and the assurance that somehow the means would be forthcoming, led me at once to look at the bright side, and with renewed confidence apply myself to the work I had undertaken." Referring in February of next year to help he had received, he says : " I feel now as I never felt before, that a real connection, a real bond of union exists between ' dear old 39 ' and our Medical Mission here. I cannot, my dear Thomson, express the gratitude I feel for your personal interest and aid, and for all that you have done and are doing for the success of the work in which I am engaged here. I'll say no more than this : that I feel more than I can express, and I pray God that He may enrich your soul with all spiritual blessings, and abundantly bless and prosper the work in which you are engaged, and that He may give you in your sweet experience to realize that ' there is that scattereth and yet increaseth.' "

Dr. Lowe himself got support for two of the students, and the £35 needed for the other five was duly forwarded, year by year, to the Rev. Dr. Tidman, Secretary of the London Missionary Society, who received the money most gratefully.

To give the young men every possible advantage, Medical, Surgical, and Anatomical books were sent out to them, Anatomical plates, skeleton, disarticulated skull, pocket cases, instruments of various kinds, etc., involving an outlay of upwards of £60. I am glad the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society contributed to this equipment. Writing to Dr. Lowe in January, 1865, I remembered there was to be a committee meeting next morning, and promised to attend to see if I could not get a grant of £10 to help us, so added: "I have been to the meeting of Directors, and have good news for you. I sent a note to the Treasurer to prepare him for my application, and asked him to encourage me, and he did. But instead of asking them to give me a grant of £10, I asked if they would give me £1 for every pound I shall collect for you up to £25, and they have done it; so that you may pretty safely count on £50, at all events."

When the money for their last year's support reached Neyoor, the students, moved by gratitude, sent a letter to the kind friends who had helped them. As the production is entirely their own, and is written in English, we give without alteration the opening paragraph: "*Neyoor Hospital, September 2nd, 1867.* Respected and dear Sirs,—We feel very thankful to be able to inform you that we are spared until now, the third year of our medical studies. We rejoice to remember the great interest you have taken in Medicine in general, and the Institution here in particular. In no other way can we show our sincere gratitude for

the interest you and other friends continue to take in us, as well as in our work, than by writing these few lines, and praying fervently for your health, long life, and success in all your undertakings."

After mentioning the aid they derived in study from the skeletons, books, diagrams, chemical apparatus, etc., they continue: "We must further thank you and other friends for the pecuniary assistance you render towards our support. The establishment of such an Institution in this locality is indeed a great blessing to all classes. A vast amount of good, both bodily and spiritually, is being done among the patients of different castes and religions, from the highest Brahmin to the lowest Pariah, who resort to the Hospital even from forty or sixty miles distant, and sit together under the same roof hearing the Word of God preached, without manifesting any aversion or hatred towards each other or towards us. Thus we see the words fulfilled, 'The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.'"

We need not enlarge. The experiment was a great success. Even after Dr. Lowe left the country most favourable reports reached us about the work of the young men.

Peculiarly delightful it was to me to be granted the privilege of aiding an effort like this; it made me feel as if I were multiplying myself and increasing my

power of helping forward the Kingdom of God. This "scheme of his own" must have been a source of much gratification to Dr. Lowe ; for though veritably "his own," it advanced the interests of his Society, was a joy to his colleagues, a valuable contribution to the cause of medical missions, and in short it was the brightest spot in his missionary career.

CHAPTER XVI

BOMBAY MEDICAL MISSION: THE ANSWER TO PRAYER

AT an early stage in our intercourse Dr. Macqueen, a Director of the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society, brought before me his earnest desire to see Institutions like that in the Cowgate introduced and multiplied in India. The more our Dispensary and Training School flourished, the greater was his longing, and at length he took up his pen and pleaded for the cause. The following sentences are out of the Society's Report for 1863 :—

“Dr. Kenneth Macqueen, impressed by the vastness of the field in India, and the utter inadequacy of European effort to overtake it properly, is very anxious that Institutions, on a plan similar to our own Dispensary and Training School in the Cowgate, should be opened in the principal cities of India, with the special object of training young native students of medicine as medical missionaries to their neglected countrymen. Many well-instructed natives of that vast peninsula are now receiving a complete medical education, and some of these, it is to be hoped, are Christian disciples. Is it not very desirable, therefore,

that the Medical Mission principle should be brought prominently forward, and practically illustrated before their eyes, so that as many as possible may go forth from the Institution with both the zeal and the skill of accomplished Medical Missionaries? ”

Cordially sympathising with his desire, I brought the subject up for prayer at the very beginning of our Wednesday prayer-meetings, and it was remembered week by week for five years.

At length I ventured to put it before the Lord, that if He did not wish a Training Institution in Bombay, He would allow me to cease pleading for it. Before next meeting I got an answer. When walking across the meadows with my pastor, the Rev. Dr. T. Smith, he said, “ By the bye, I met Mr. — the other day, and he was saying that he did not know how best to dispose of his money to help forward the cause of Christ. I asked for a grant to clear off our debt, and his answer was that he did not give to home work.” This was as nearly as I can recall the substance of Dr. Smith’s remarks. The thought dawned on me at once that I could give him an excellent opportunity of getting rid of his money ; so without giving names I laid the matter before our Wednesday prayer-meeting, asking prayer. And, after very specially seeking guidance from my Heavenly Father, I wrote the following week to the gentleman, briefly asking if he would give £2,000 to establish an Institution like the Cowgate one in Bombay. He had heard me lecture, so knew about our Training School.

The result was that Dr. Macqueen received a letter offering £2,000 ; one thousand pounds for Bombay, and the other for Calcutta, if a similar sum for each could be raised from other sources within a month. No one knew I had written. The offer caused no little stir amongst the Directors. On November 4th, 1863, Dr. Macqueen wrote to me : " Mr. Cullen has been here. We have had a most satisfactory conference, and are all of one mind and way. You and I may be more enthusiastic, but I believe he is firmly fixed, and will not only give good advice but good assistance." Again on December 25th he wrote to me : " The hope of the scheme rests now mainly, if not solely, upon you.¹ Mr. Cullen is evidently discouraged and has little hope of success." On January 2nd, 1864, the following note was sent by Dr. Macqueen to the donor : " The time to which you limited your munificent offer in respect of the Indian Medical Mission Dispensaries has long ago expired. Neither Mr. Thomson nor myself have yet done anything to enable us to claim your generous support. We trusted entirely to Mr. Cullen. As he has not succeeded, if you will kindly consent to give us a little more time, we will try what a plain statement of the case can produce."

When the Directors ceased their efforts, I set myself in right earnest, believing that the movement was

¹ Dr. Macqueen used to call Burns Thomson the " Prince of Beggars ! "—ED.

of God, to lay its claims before the friends of Jesus I got every help my beloved Macqueen could give.

Soon money began to come in, and when it reached such an amount that justified a genuine hope of success, the Directors came to our aid. Ten days before the date to which we were limited, the deficit was considerably above £200, and at our Wednesday prayer-meeting I pleaded very urgently that God would give us the balance by May 1st. That Wednesday there was present, at the meeting, an aged housekeeper who was a member of the Rev. Dr Charles Brown's congregation. She was much interested in the subject, and went to pour out her heart about it to her minister's wife.

When Mrs. Brown heard Bombay mentioned, she said, "That will interest my son, who is home from Bombay just now. I will speak to him about it."

Accordingly she did, and I was invited to meet the Hon. Alex. Brown. After stating the case to him, and answering his various questions, he said, "I will make up the deficiency ; I will give you £50 myself, and be security for the rest." At worship that night we sang very joyously Psalm xxxvii. 5 :—

"Thy way to God commit, Him trust,
It bring to pass shall He."

On the 1st of May the Society wrote to the donor asking an extension of time ; but privately I also wrote, telling him the full amount was realized, though not yet all in my hands, and that an extension was

not necessary. I judged it expedient not to let the fact be known until all the donations promised were sent in. These were shortly in hand, and also the £1,000 from our generous friend.

One morning, returning from a committee meeting, I found awaiting me in my little room in the Cowgate the splendid sum of £1,192—£192 *over and above the amount required*. Thus were our prayers answered. Graciously God had sent my wife this morning (unusual, being a Saturday) to the Dispensary to rejoice with me in this great joy. After pouring out our hearts together in gratitude and praise, we read the 29th chapter of 1 Chronicles, specially noticing the 16th verse: "O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to build Thee an house for Thine holy name cometh of Thine hand, and is all Thine own."

CHAPTER XVII

MADAGASCAR ITS FIRST MEDICAL MISSION AND MEDICAL MISSIONARY COLLEGE

THE island of Madagascar is larger than Great Britain and Ireland, and is peopled by an active and intelligent race, numbering about seven millions. Here, as in many other heathen lands, religion and the healing art go hand-in-hand. The priests are the physicians, and every department of life, social and civil, is saturated with this blended form of superstition. It is plain that the best means of overturning such a system, and at the same time of unfolding the religion of Jesus, is a Medical Mission. The capital, Antananarivo, which is the great centre of missionary life and action, is about 4,800 feet above the level of the sea ; that is, about 1,000 feet higher than the *ague* ever rises in that island. This elevation gives, besides exemption from intermittent fever, a more temperate climate than could be expected in a latitude of 18° south. The common variation of temperature is between 58° and 80° F.

The value of the island as a centre of missionary effort cannot be over-estimated. Its importance in

this respect may be indicated by merely adverting to its position relative to the great Eastern continents, and bearing in mind, at the same time, that it is peopled by a noble race, who make capital ministers and missionaries.

The *stamina* of the people was tested by a persecution that lasted for thirty years. During twenty-five years they were persecuted to the death. Like our own martyr fathers, they were hunted like partridges on the mountains; every form of religious service was interdicted; *to pray even was to sin capitally*. Hundreds died from fever, starvation, etc., in their wanderings in the woods and mountains, "in the dens and caves of the earth," and hundreds more, when captured, were cruelly put to death. Through that long night of oppression, Christianity not only continued to exist, but actually grew. Surely the Church in that island, when so disciplined, was being prepared by the Lord for some great work!

At the close of the persecution, on the ascension to the throne of Radama II., Dr. Andrew Davidson, one of my first students, was sent to Antananarivo by the London Missionary Society. He began operations at once. The following passage is from one of his earliest letters in 1862:—

"I opened a Dispensary the first week I arrived. My patients at present are at the rate of 5,000 or 6,000 per annum. The Dispensary has been presented by the Prime Minister, who had gout, but is now better. He has suffered nine years, sometimes a month at a

time. The remedies used have greatly abridged and mitigated his last attack. He is to build me a house, as well as grant me a Dispensary. I may say, also, that though the French doctors have come here and done their best to introduce themselves to the Court, I have been chosen Court Physician, and have received from the King the medal of the Order of Radama, for my successful treatment of his son."

Never physician had more brilliant prospects than lay before Dr. Davidson at this time, if he had consented to turn aside from his mission work ; but he was enabled to be faithful, and was content to continue poor for the sake of Him who *became* poor that "we, through His poverty, might be made rich."

"I conduct my Dispensary," writes Dr. Davidson, "on the very same principle as your own : open with prayer and reading of the Bible at seven o'clock every morning ; see the patients until nine and give medicines ; then visit the sick in their own homes."

The French physicians were obliged to leave, and Dr. Davidson was left alone, not only in a city of 60,000 inhabitants, but in an island containing some seven millions, from the remotest extremity of which patients soon began to come to him. The patients frequently lay at the Dispensary door all night to get a chance of treatment next day ; and oft, when the doctor rushed out to snatch a hasty meal, a sick or dying baby was tumbled bodily into his palanquin amid the wailings of its broken-hearted mother. In

such circumstances the first, the instinctive, the urgent cry of the doctor was for *help—send help*.

But it was not the mere unintelligent outcry of an oppressed spirit for deliverance from its burden. It was certainly in no great measure to get relief to himself, but to bring great, substantial, and permanent blessings to the land of his adoption, that he longed for assistance. His labours in the island had made him acquainted with the wants and capabilities of the people, and in the end of 1863 he wrote as follows : “ The Malagasy are a noble race of people, quick to learn, anxious to get knowledge, but many of them have never heard that there is a Gospel, and heathenism is strong. I need not say that such war-like tribes as the Sacalavas and Betsilios, and many others, have not yet been reached by the white man, and are not likely to be for many years. *I do honestly and firmly believe that if I had put into my hands a very moderate sum per annum, I could reach within a few years every tribe in the country. My plan is this : to select suitable Christian young natives, train them in medicine and in the faith of Christ, and send them out as pioneers of the clerical missionary. It is not a wild scheme ; it is a sober and practical one ; but to carry it out I must have an HOSPITAL and ASSISTANTS.*”

On the 14th January, 1864, the doctor writes :—

“ To-day I began building the Hospital, the first hospital in the great island of Madagascar. It shall stand there at Analakely as a testimony to our humanity, our science, and our Christianity. I think

of it with thankfulness, and believe it will be a grand witness to this young nation of the love of God—a sermon in stone and lime. The nobles are anxious to help in the building, and were it not that they are pledged to help us, we could not erect such a building under £1,000. It is the first time in their history that the people have united of their own free will to carry out a benevolent design. The Queen sent officers with music, etc., to represent her on the occasion of laying the foundation stone, and designated it ‘The Royal Hospital.’ What a glorious field opens up to me if I could *get help*!! How can I get assistance? *I must have help.*”

I must pause in this outline of Medical Mission work in Madagascar to notice two curious Malagasy customs. “The feast of Fandroana,” which means “The Washing,” begins at the new moon by the people washing themselves (a thing they do stand in need of), and then a young heifer of a certain age, red colour, with white stripes or bars, with horns of an orthodox twist and symmetrical, and without a fault or flaw, is sacrificed by some man who has no disease and whose father is still alive. After this many bullocks are killed by the people, and a portion of each is presented to the Royal family and the remainder is eaten with great rejoicing. This seems curiously Jewish, does it not?

“There is a family or clan here who cannot be killed even for penal crimes. The tradition is, Andraimpoimerina was told that one man must die for

the people. He sent to get one, but all fled excepting one man, who came and offered himself as a substitute. The King took a lamb and caused it to be sacrificed in his stead ; and, as a reward for the devotion that led to the offer, decreed that in all time coming the descendants of this man should be free from death for all offences. I am told that if one of them commits a crime worthy of death, a lamb must be sacrificed in his stead. The descendants of this worthy are now very numerous, and live near the capital. This idea of substitution and of blood for remission is very significant."

I turn again to the doctor's touching cry for help. I wrote to the London Missionary Society, expressing my willingness to bear the entire pecuniary responsibility of sending out and supporting a medical assistant and nurse to strengthen the hands of Dr. Davidson. There were delays that need not be detailed. It was impossible the doctor could continue to bear up under the pressure of fever and oppressive work combined ; so he came to this country for his health at the close of 1866.

He found the finances of the London Missionary Society in an unsatisfactory condition, and he could not expect them to send out another agent. In these circumstances he said to the Directors, "Send you out another agent, and I shall return to Madagascar at my own risk to work for you as before, but without holding you responsible for my support." This was suggesting a method whereby they might get the

benefit of two agents at the usual cost of one. Shortly afterwards the doctor came to Scotland, and this proposal, along with another respecting a nurse, was sent up in writing to the Directors of the London Missionary Society for their consideration.

Instead of accepting proffered assistance, the Society transferred the whole concern to Dr. Davidson and myself, leaving us free and unhampered to carry out our ideas.

At first we staggered not a little under a deep sense of responsibility, but the Lord helped us. "Entering on a work so important," said the Directors of the London Missionary Society to us, "it would be in every way best to adopt your own system and carry out things in your own way; . . . that you be left *free and unhampered* in your administration." The meaning of those pregnant words we fully realized, and were encouraged by them to do our best. Through the Divine blessing and the aid of Christian friends, we have been privileged to be helpful in initiating various agencies fitted to tell favourably, as we hope, on the future history of that great nation.

This was the dawn of a new era in the Madagascar Medical Mission. "*Free and unhampered*" are terms fully understood by Müller, Fliedner, Ranyard, Meredith, Macpherson, Pennefather, etc., etc. Soon a nurse was sent out to help Dr. Davidson, and not long after Dr. William Mackie, another of my pupils.

After his return to Madagascar, Dr. Davidson writes :—

“ My work is very heavy, and besides attendance on the sick at the Dispensary and Hospital and the education of the pupils, I have done something in the way of preparing medical works for them and the Island. I have finished a treatise on Physiology—eighty folio pages of close writing. I have made considerable progress with a more extensive work on the Practice of medicine, and am at present going over *Materia Medica* with my students. The Government have requested me to proceed with these works, and have offered to supply clerks to make copies, especially one for Her Majesty. I can only thank you and other kind friends for the valuable aid you have rendered me in the way of books.

“ The Committee of the London Missionary Society agreed yesterday to print 1,000 copies of the work on Midwifery, 66 pp. This will be a great boon to the nurses ; and 1,000 copies of another small work on ‘The Care of the Body.’ They have also resolved to print as soon as possible ‘Chemistry,’ 500 pp. Copies will be sent you as soon as ready, but I am afraid the Chemistry will require a long time to print.”

Through the kind assistance of Theodore Maxwell, Esq., B.Sc., etc., and lecturer on chemistry, London, I was enabled to send out a really useful chemical apparatus with tests. The students greatly appreciated this gift, and sent the following note, which, as it is short, I give first in Malagasy :—

“ANTANANARIVO, *February*, 1871.

“ANY DR. THOMSON, Edinburgh.—Tompokolahy, —Faly izahay, no ho ny fahatongavany ny zavatra Chemical, izay nampitondrainao tany aminay ; koa dia misaotra anao izahay aminy fampitondranao izany, mba hampitombo ny fahendrenay, hahalalanay ny zavatra samihafa. Ary Andriamanitra anie hitahy anao, sy hanao soa aminao, aminy andro hivelomanao rehetra. Dia Mamangy anao izehay rehetra. Veloma hianao, hoy RAHAMEFY, sy, etc., etc.”

[*Translation.*] “To Dr. THOMSON.—Sir,—We are glad on account of the arrival of the chemical apparatus which you have sent here for us ; also we thank you for sending them to increase our wisdom, that we may know different things. And may God bless you, and do you good during all the days of your life. And the whole of us salute you. May you live long, say RAHAMEFY, etc.”

Dr. Davidson writes :—

“As a mark of confidence, the Queen has given me a grant of land, about thirty miles east of the capital, that, in case I or my family should require change of air, we may have some place to go to. So, if ever you come out to visit me, I can give you a quiet retreat. My health is keeping good. I never felt so well or so hopeful.

“There is now an opportunity not to be let slip of educating natives in medicine. Labouring away, alone and unassisted in my Hospital, I have succeeded in

training a few young men, one of whom is carrying on a mission at Fianarantsoa. With the assistance which I now expect, I think I can establish a COLLEGE for the training of Medical Missionaries, and for the education of medical men. We have a good Hospital already in full work, and a Dispensary where about seven thousand separate cases are treated annually. What we have hitherto wanted has been teachers. I hope this want will be supplied. As in such a work the sanction of the Queen is of course necessary, I laid my scheme before her, asking for leave to teach at least twenty of the best educated youths in medicine and surgery, and asking her to recognise as doctors only those so educated. I have reason to believe my proposals will be adopted. She has told me to give her a list of the young men I want, and they will be placed entirely under my control. I am selecting from the schools the best I can find. I am not taking any who have not a good knowledge of arithmetic to decimal fractions, geography, history, Malagasy grammar, and English. I have secured the assistance of my friends here in this work, so that after Christmas the Malagasy Medical Mission College commences with the following programme :—

“ First session—six months.

1. Anatomy, 6 to 7 a.m., Andreangaly.
2. Physiology, 7 to 8 a.m., Dr. Davidson.
3. English, etc., 8 to 10 a.m., Mr. Sewell.
4. Chemistry, 10 to 11 a.m., Dr. Borchgrevinck
the Norwegian Mission.

5. Natural Philosophy, Jas. Cameron, Esq.
6. Algebra and Geometry, Mr. Barker.
7. Bible knowledge, one of the Missionaries, probably Mr. Jukes.

“ If Dr. Mackie comes, the second session will be more complete. Out of the twenty young men so selected, I trust to find several suitable for mission work. However careful I may be in selecting them, I cannot expect them all to turn out well. I believe that the Medical Mission will be put in the way of extending its usefulness, and be able to reach distant tribes which no other agency can get at. The expenses connected with this scheme will be very trifling. The practical education of these students will be carried on daily in the Hospital.”

We had thus a *bonâ-fide* Medical Mission College in that interesting island. It enjoyed not merely the sanction, but the warm encouragement of the Queen and court.

To promote the efficiency of the medical teaching in the college, I brought three natives to Edinburgh to be trained in medicine. One died before passing his preliminary examination; the two others did capitally in their classes, taking prizes and certificates of merit, and went back fully qualified medical practitioners. One of these died not long after his return home. The other still lives, and being of high caste, and an excellent physician, he was called to attend the Queen and court. When Dr. Davidson was obliged to leave the Island, I did not feel justified

in continuing the support of the Medical Mission, and it was taken over by the London Missionary Society and the Friends Society.

Before closing, I must give one or two illustrations of Dr. Davidson's influence for good in that interesting land.

"There are three most interesting cases specially connected with my work that I ought to notice. Yesterday I had a visit from an officer called Raim-saimpina. His wife is a constant companion of the Queen, and nursed Rasohery during her illness. The man has all along been a devoted heathen. While the late Queen was at Maravano, she sent him to me on account of a chronic disorder from which he suffered. Since then I have seen a good deal of him. He came to me yesterday to tell me that he had resolved to go to church, and that he had begun to pray. The second case is that of the chief judge, and head of the civilians. The civilians have hitherto been the conservatives, the real promoters of persecution, and the supporters of their ancestors. He has been under my care lately, and had time to read his Bible, and I expect to see him next Sunday in the church at Analakely. His presence in church will do much to dispel the fears and overcome the opposition of the millions of whom he is the recognised chief and representative. The last case I shall only name. Last Sabbath, my veteran assistant, Raberanto, conducted to the church at Analakely the chief of the court diviners, who says he is anxious to

know thoroughly the doctrines of Christianity. He is not as yet a follower of Christ, but his open renunciation of heathenism must have some effect on the court, where he was wont to be a diviner. You see we are not without our influence on the destinies of this great country, and we are not without evidence fitted to encourage us."

Dr. Davidson's first battle was with the Jesuits, his second with the idols. The idols are the doctors of Madagascar. The principal idol, Kelimalaza, is the great healing god of the land. The doctor had not been long in the capital before its keepers began to come secretly to him, Nicodemus fashion, to be cured of their maladies. The public soon came to understand that even the keepers of the idols went to the doctor for medicine, and this tended very much to destroy their confidence in the idols. At last the Queen was taken ill. Although Dr. Davidson was appointed physician to Her Majesty, yet being the head of a heathen Government, she feared to call him to her aid, notwithstanding that her gods were failing. She was suffering from a lingering illness, and was getting no better. At last matters came to such a crisis that Dr. Davidson was summoned to wait on Her Majesty, and he ordered her to the country, and to be kept quiet. At that time the Kingdom was in a very unsettled state; but although the uneasiness was rather increased by the fact that Dr. Davidson was sent for, I have no doubt his presence exerted a most powerful influence on

the present condition of that land. For three weeks he was locked up in the palace. A day or two after his being locked up, a disturbance was raised in the Capital, and the Prime Minister wished the Queen to go back to town. Dr. Davidson assured him that she could not be moved without injury to her health. "And how," said he, "will you get her back, for she has assured me she will not go till she is better?" The Prime Minister then said that he could manage to get her to the Capital by means of the idols. The doctor was sitting in the garden with the French Consul when the sampy (idol) came, and its approach was announced by shouts of "Tonga Belzebuba! Tonga Belzebuba!" (Beelzebub has come, come has Beelzebub). When they entered, the Queen asked, "What do you want?" They answered, "Keli-malaza desires you, madam, to leave to-day and return to the City." After a little she replied, "You may depart, for I won't go." The chief — ran down the garden, exclaiming in perfect astonishment, "Resy Belzebuba! Resy Belzebuba!" (Beelzebub's defeated, Beelzebub's defeated.) And so it was, from that day till she died she gave up her idols. During the whole of these three weeks Dr. Davidson had excellent opportunities, which you may be sure he embraced, of speaking for his Lord and Master.

I need hardly enter on the recent changes, as they are so well known: how the present Queen has been baptized, and no fewer than 20,000 souls in one year added to the Church in one province alone. The

Government of Madagascar felt so deeply benefited by the services Dr. Davidson had rendered that, on notifying to this country the accession of the Queen, Her Majesty referred to the value of the doctor's services, and this Her Majesty Queen Victoria suitably acknowledged.

I know of no mission that has exerted so great an influence on the destinies of a nation as the Medical Mission, under Dr. Davidson, in Madagascar.

Let it not be supposed that my admiration of the cause, and my special relation to it, has led me to think of it too highly ; testimonies to its value are manifold. Let me take two out of the many ; the one collective, the other individual. The L.M.S. Committee at Antananarivo say, "We feel that it is hardly possible to exaggerate the importance of this work." And Mr. Street, one of the Friends, wrote, "I think I do not exaggerate in saying that the Medical Mission here has been an agency for good, not excelled by that of all the other Missions put together." And to these we may add one sentence out of the Report of the Ed. M.M.S., of 1869 : "We can hardly imagine an undertaking more full of promise, and more worthy of large-hearted encouragement by the prayers and liberality of Christians at home, than the Madagascar Medical Mission."

CHAPTER XVIII

WOMEN AND MEDICAL MISSIONS: FULL AND PARTIAL QUALIFICATION

FROM the time I learned the value of Missionary Nurses, I thought of the power for good that might be exercised by educated Christian Ladies amongst their ignorant and degraded sisters in heathen lands.

In 1872, my friend and former pupil, Dr. Elmslie, after referring to the evils wrought by the ignorance of the native nurses or midwives, who are virtually the only doctors of women in India, goes on to ask, "Is there no other key but education with which to open the door to the inner social life of India? We think there is certainly one other such key, and that is by Female Medical Missionaries.

"I believe that there are few, if any, houses into which the Lady Medical Missionary would not be heartily welcomed and blessed for her humane efforts. She would find an entrance where the educational Missionary would find the door closed. She would soften bigotry, remove prejudice, dispel ignorance, and drive away gloom, and unobtrusively but effectually deposit the all-prevailing leaven of the Gospel in numberless hearts and homes."

Dr. Elmslie believed all Female Medical Missionaries should be fully qualified. He aimed at a high measure of accomplishment, and unquestionably he was right; but it is well to remember when one thinks of the extent of the field, the urgency of the need, and the paucity of thoroughly equipped Medical Lady Workers, that a vast amount of good may be done amongst the needy daughters of heathendom with a very moderate amount of Medical Training. I cannot express myself with hesitation on this point. If a poorly educated woman by a few months' training can be manufactured into a substantial blessing as a nurse to her suffering sisters in this country, what should we not expect from educated Christian Ladies after a year or two of proper Medical Training when they are planted among the heathen?

We little realize in this country the treatment to which these poor women are subjected in their time of sore need. I give one single example, where a lady without medical knowledge, but with sound common sense, might have saved a much-prized life had she been in time.

"I went," writes my friend, "to A.'s house, and found a most touching scene; poor S., who for months past had been spending her life in thinking of the coming treasure, lying prostrate and crying wildly. On the floor on a board lay the white covered form of a very tiny baby, and in the adjoining room sat the father gazing abstractedly at the little white coffin, which was to be his child's first

and only cradle. The discomfort in which the mother was lying and the disorder all round would have amazed you. I am used to that now, but the story of neglect I had to hear filled me with indignation, and a great longing to remedy such a state of things. The Dai, or nurse, had left the baby on the cold mud floor, not even covering it while she attended to the mother. It must have lain uncared for quite an hour, when R., a native Christian woman, arrived and found it *quite cold*. Nothing could save it then, for it could scarcely breathe, though everything possible R. tried, and by 3 o'clock the little life ebbed away.

“They laid it before the mother’s eyes dressed for burial, and expected her not to cry, for ‘such is the will of God,’ they said. The wretched old hag of a Dai sat by smoking her hookah quite unconcerned. . . . Get as many fully qualified Lady Medical Missionaries as possible; but meanwhile, till the supply is equal to the demand, let every Lady Missionary preparing to go to India be encouraged to take a year’s medical training.”

I joyfully welcomed applicants for such training. When those who came to me were young and had enjoyed a liberal education, I urged them to go in for a full Medical course; but when they were more matured, I took them up at once for one or two years. The training of these Ladies was, of course, much more comprehensive than that of the nurses. In midwifery both had full instructions; but where

the nurses were taught to carry out instructions, the Ladies were educated to act where there was no doctor. On appointed days they sat beside me during the examination of patients, who were made the subject of instruction. Typical cases of disease, as they passed through my hands, were selected and placed especially under their care. They were supplied with the best text-books, and referring to them for each patient's ailment, they soon acquired an intense interest in their cases, and made wonderful progress in practical knowledge. My assistant or I gave them systematic lectures three times a week, and they learned as well to compound and dispense medicines, while every morning they had abundant opportunity of practice in bandaging and dressing wounds, as all the patients requiring such attention came early each day but Sabbath.

Here I must notice the little Hospital which I had when working in the Canongate. There were two large rooms that could be fitted up for the reception of patients. Save on special occasions one room only was used, and it contained six beds and three couches, the gifts of kind friends. Light screens divided each bed from its neighbour, so that a patient could be perfectly isolated. For those Ladies who could not get entrance to the public Hospitals, our little retreat was invaluable. Such patients were selected as far as possible with a view to their education. Here they had an opportunity of regulating the food, temperature, and ventilation,

and every change in the condition of the sufferer could be noted. The patients may be said to have been in their hands under my supervision. Enough about training,—what of results?

I give a few extracts from letters from two Ladies belonging to the Irish Presbyterian Church, and sent out in 1876 to Surat, India, where that church had established a Mission. Miss Forrest writes :—

“About three weeks ago Mr. Montgomery, the father of the Mission here, who has been thirty-five years in India, opened our little Dispensary and gave an address. You would have rejoiced to see the gathering, upwards of forty women and children, not one of whom had ever heard the Bible read before. The majority listened with attention, some with an eagerness touching in its expression of wonder. Now you see we are fairly established in our special branch of Mission work, and instead of finding a difficulty in getting access to the people, they are coming in such numbers we fear we shall hardly be able to attend to them all. Besides the patients who come to us and keep us very busy, we have several Parsee ladies on our sick list whom we visit at their homes.

“It is rather slow work getting through with an interpreter, but ours is a most gentle, faithful creature. One peculiarity of the natives here is, that you must tell them exactly what is the matter, and say positively whether they will recover or not. Miss Patteson and I were much amused with an old lady who had been ill for some time, and who was most

anxious to have my opinion. As there was nothing very definitely the matter, and I was anxious to guard myself, I said, 'It is old age, and accompanying infirmity.' I wish you could have seen the look she gave me, when she broke forth : 'Before this illness came I was as young looking as yourself.' I assured her I had no doubt of it, and that she was still handsome, which quite pacified the old lady. I have a patient just now in whom I am deeply interested. She is a Parsee in good circumstances. She was seized some months ago with a violent pain in her knee and other untoward symptoms. There was a Christian living near who was coming to us with an ulcer, and as he began to improve, this woman asked me to do something for her too, so I took up her case, and before we left for our holiday she was very much better.

"My first patient, whom Miss Patteson calls my Advertisement, brought a sister of hers one day for treatment. She was just tottering with weakness from long-continued diarrhœa. I gave her a pill, which she had not the sense to swallow till she had chewed it. Then she could not drink our water without breaking caste. She declared when outside that she might die, but take more of our medicine she never would. She was slightly better that night, but in a day or two, becoming worse, she sent to ask if I would go and see her. This was my first visit to a real native house, and in broad daylight I could hardly see the woman's tongue. She soon got per-

fectly well. Two or three weeks after, at a prayer-meeting held for Christians in the neighbourhood of her bamboo and mud hovel, she walked into the meeting of her own accord. I cannot express the joy it gave me to see this poor woman join us. I hardly think she can be called an inquirer, or that she is even much impressed, yet how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?"

Miss Patteson writes from the same mission: "I think your eyes would be gladdened to see the sick people coming to our Dispensary. They go on gathering from early morning till 8 o'clock, when the doors are shut and we go down to begin work.

"There on the matting sit, in their own peculiar fashion, the poor Dherds, and on benches the Parsees, Mahomedans, and high-caste Hindoos; in all between forty and fifty. The old Munshi addresses the people in their own tongue for about fifteen minutes. On Saturday morning Mrs. Taylor sings Gujerati hymns set to native airs. They listen most attentively. Then, after prayer, we begin with those who have come the longest distance: some travel fifteen, twenty, and even thirty miles. Fevers of many kinds, dysenteries, leprosy, epilepsy, coughs, skin diseases, sore eyes, and what is most common, 'pattudukachaies.' There's a word for you, and for not a very terrible ailment—stomach-aches.

"Among the better class of Hindoo and Parsee women we have many cases of disease. We have been able to relieve pain in visiting these cases in

their homes ; and we notice gladly that wherever we have been successful in treating a patient many come from that quarter. In every instance we are received with graciousness and courtesy, though we daily offend their caste by touching the poor pariahs who come for medicine. One distinctive feature of our treatment, when practicable, is to administer the medicine ourselves. If you saw us coming out of our inner room armed with two little tumblers, one with 'osurd,' the other with 'pannin,' and then the patient opening her mouth, you would think this rather an amusing part of our work. We found that the medicine was often not taken at home, and we could not have our precious quinine wasted. There are many cases we would like your advice about. . . . One case of dysentery died. When I first saw the patient, I feared she was too far gone. She had been living in the jungle, and the long march into town with fever on her brought her to this state. Our remedies had little effect ; she lingered eight days, then died."

The above are but faint glimpses, and that too at the dawn of the good work, which grew till nearly 10,000 patients the last year passed through that Dispensary, all of whom heard the glad tidings of salvation through Jesus.

CHAPTER XIX

THE MISSION NURSES: AT HOME AND ABROAD

I N my early Cowgate days a Christian lady provided the Medical Mission Dispensary with the services of a Bible woman. She was to be under my direction and control. Working as I was in a district of such poverty and ignorance, scarcely a day passed in which I did not feel the need of help from an intelligent, kindly woman, and I began by asking my new friend to look in on certain sufferers, and speak a word of cheer. I soon noticed that the houses she thus visited always looked more tidy after she had been there. She was not content with reading and prayer ; but the patient was made as comfortable as possible, and the room made clean and neat so quietly and gently that the operation was rather a pleasant variety to the invalid than a source of irritation. She was often sent with supplies of food, and now and then to administer medicines.

Insensibly she was thus gliding into a new position, and at last a severe case of peritonitis effectually opened my eyes to her value. I did not know where to turn for help for this poor woman, so, in the emergency, I asked the Bible woman if she could apply

fomentations. *She thought she could learn*, she said. Soon we had the requisite cloths made, and an amusing process of wringing them out of hot water gone through, as well as minute instructions given how to avoid wetting the linen or blistering the patient. We went together to the house of the stricken one, and I made the first application myself, but was obliged to leave her, hoping she might manage to continue the needful service and administer the other remedies prescribed. She did capitally. The inflammation was arrested, and the woman recovered. I learned after that every time the hot cloths were renewed the Bible woman went on her knees at the bedside and pleaded so tenderly and urgently with the loving Jesus to bless the means being used, that the patient's heart was stirred to pray for herself after a new fashion, and this resulted in her becoming a new creature in Christ Jesus.

I was satisfied that, with God's blessing, the Bible woman had been the means of carrying life in a double sense to the afflicted woman, and therefore, as she was willing, I gladly trained her systematically as a nurse. She was my first Home Missionary Nurse.

I used to ask each applicant for training, "When sent to sick ones in this district, are you prepared to do for them whatever you would be willing to do for your own brother or sister?" No hesitating reply was ever given me. As some indication of the strange positions in which they might sometimes find them-

selves, I also asked, "Do you think you could manage to dress a baby if you had nothing to put on it?" Their attempts to answer this were interesting and instructive. This was not merely an imaginary position, as the following case shows:—One night, when preparing for rest, I was summoned to an urgent case. The tenement was not far off, and groping my way up the dark and rickety staircase, I found myself in a room lighted by the end of a flickering candle stuck in an old bottle, which unsteady light only lasted long enough to show the surrounding desolation. The fireplace had neither grate nor fire. Of furniture there was none—no table, no chair, not even a stool. An occasional groan guided me to what seemed a heap of rubbish in a corner, and there lay my patient.

Having secured a light, I found that the poor creature was seriously ill, and that there was need of prompt skill and care. She had been "hawking" all day, and over-exertion had brought the hour of her sorrow upon her somewhat unexpectedly, and for this she was utterly unprepared. With the nurse's help we made various arrangements for her comfort, and then, turning up the pail which usually held the soiled water, I sat down on it, prepared for such services as might be required. After a weary wait, our faithfulness was rewarded by the arrival of a couple of brisk little strangers, whose appeals for shelter brooked neither trifling nor delay. What could we do? There was not a rag for the last one but an old handkerchief

and the skirt of the mother's gown. Truly the nurse got enough to do that night, and learned by experience what I meant by clothing babies when there was nothing to put on.

As every day deepened my appreciation of the value of such workers amongst our sick poor, I longed to increase their numbers. Two obstacles existed : the difficulty of getting suitable women, and funds for their support. The women must be blessed with earnest godliness and shrewd common sense, or, as Prof. Miller pithily expressed it, "Piety and gumption." The Society would not venture beyond its present liabilities in this direction ; so if there was to be extension the responsibility of expense must rest on me. My only resource was prayer in this case. I laid the matter very specially before the Lord at family worship, and also at the Wednesday prayer-meeting, which was composed of lady workers and any friends interested who cared to join us, and very soon God indicated the path of duty by sending suitable women, and providing the needful supply of money. Through the kindness of the Chalmers Hospital Lady Superintendent and authorities, I was enabled to give these nurses the benefit of real Hospital experience, and after my connection with the Cowgate was broken, they enjoyed training in my own small Hospital in the Canongate. In 1872 I was able to supply three nurses for posts in various parts of Scotland, and to take on five more for training.

My nurses were truly Bible-women nurses, who

worked not merely for hire, but out of love for the Master, and desire to walk in His steps.

I know no form of service more rich in precious opportunities for commending Christ, when a nurse's heart is warm with love to Jesus, or more useful in bringing wanderers home to His fold, but no one needs to live nearer the Master than a Missionary nurse.

If this form of Christian service was so valuable in a City like Edinburgh, I could not help thinking what its worth would be in heathen lands, and I longed to put it to the test. Again I took this to the Lord at our prayer-meeting, and He was pleased to open the way. I had a nurse at work in the Dispensary, whom I judged to be admirably suited ; and as Dr. Vartan, then at home from Nazareth, expressed his conviction that there were splendid opportunities amongst women in his Mission, he agreed to take her on trial for three years, and I became responsible for the expense. Thus Elizabeth Ramage became my first Foreign Missionary nurse, and started with Dr. Vartan in July, 1867, followed by much prayer for Divine blessing and guidance.

A few extracts from her letters give glimpses of interest. "I am beginning to feel Nazareth like my home, and am making some progress in the language, though speaking is not as you read, and that is a drawback. We have had some interesting cases. One was a poor leper girl ; I noticed her first in the street, and on speaking to her, found her father was dead. Her mother had married again, and left her

and a baby sister with no home and no food, and nobody would come near her, or let her into their houses. I told her to come to my room, and I gave her dinner daily for some time. Then I lost sight of her, till one day some children ran after me and told me some one wished to see me. I went, as they directed me, to an old hovel, and found this poor girl in a dying state. She begged me to have mercy and take her home with me. I told the doctor, and he had her brought to the Hospital. She was one mass of corruption, and I could hardly go near her for the smell. After washing her, and doing all that was possible to relieve her, she rallied for a few days, then died. I took every opportunity of speaking, as best I could to her, of the love of Jesus. She was no sooner dead than about one hundred people came, with her mother, crying and tearing her hair. Then came the Catholic priests in their robes, carrying crosses, and took her body away. As I looked after them, I thought, 'You have got her poor body, but I hope Jesus has got her soul.'—I received the box last month and the many marks of your kindness; many thanks for all the nice things. Please send more rags and long night-gowns next time. It is a great comfort, in helping the poor here, that there is no drinking and no pawning."

Opportunities of usefulness were many, but unexpected difficulties and trials arose, under which the nurse's health gave way, and I was obliged to bring her home, but not before I had learned the

priceless value of a Missionary nurse in such a sphere. From this experience at Nazareth, I was encouraged to train a nurse for my own Mission in Madagascar, to work under Dr. Davidson. In 1870 Dr. Davidson writes : " Mrs. Hogg (the Missionary nurse I sent out) continues her valuable services in the Hospital, but at present I wish to tell you of her class of native Christian women. Fourteen have been selected by the Queen and placed under her care. I hope to give them two lectures a week, but principally they will be taught by Mrs. Hogg. You will notice there are two women for each day, so they go in couples by rotation to the Hospital ; and if any sickness occurs outside, one woman is put on duty at once in the patient's house, and an occasional visit from Mrs. Hogg or myself keeps her informed as to what she must do."

Mrs. Hogg, after writing much as above, goes on to say, " I train them in nursing and midwifery, and also teach them how to prepare proper food for the sick." She was also a great blessing to the Missionaries' wives in times of sickness, but again writes : " I am to be more with my nurses and among the poor in future, and am going daily in and out among the patients, seeking to do them good body and soul, keeping their beds clean and comfortable, teaching the ignorant who cannot read, and attending to fresh cases that come to the Dispensary. This week some of my nurses had their first cases, and got on very well. They really understand wonderfully. Dr.

Davidson is to write a book for them which will be of use." In 1874 Dr. Davidson wrote : " We have already trained two sets of women as Missionary nurses or midwives, and are contemplating a third set. Nothing that I have ever done here, I can truly say, has given me greater pleasure than the training of these native Christian women, and the good they have already accomplished is very great. They meet a want that nothing else can supply. They are no burden on the Mission, and their services are appreciated very thoroughly by the class among whom they work." Of course all did not turn out efficient nurses, but many proved first rate. Mrs. Davidson says : " I doubt if you could match them at home. One rejoices in the name of Razafy, ' the good,' and she is a splendid Missionary nurse, but has too much to do." Rev. Mr. M. writes of two of these nurses : " They are now able to devote part of their time to the quiet, unobtrusive work of spreading the knowledge of the Gospel among their fellow-women in the villages. They have worked for me in many villages, and I observe, wherever they have gone regularly, a school has sprung up, originating entirely from the desire of the people for further instruction, and supported by their own voluntary contributions ! "

CHAPTER XX

THE LINK WITH THE WIDE FIELD : THE "MEDICAL MISSION JOURNAL"

I N October, 1864, the first number of the *Medical Mission Circular* appeared. The prefatory notice tells its object and aims.

"This is at length our own Medical Mission Magazine. Humble it is in its pretensions, modest in its garb, yet, mayhap, the little one shall become a thousand. It will serve to keep those of us engaged in this work more fully acquainted than heretofore with each other's doings, and it may stir us up to a more affectionate prayerfulness on each other's behalf. It is earnestly to be hoped that it may be the means of cheering and encouraging those who in the foreign department bear the burden and heat of the day, and be useful in promoting the noble cause all of us have at heart. These general indications of the object and aims of the *Circular* may suffice to introduce it. Its issue is an experiment, and it is deemed prudent to leave it as free as possible, unhampered by promises or programmes, to work its way, under the Divine guidance and blessing, into such character and form

as shall appear best fitted to combine efficiency with economy."

My proposed publication was thus introduced to brethren abroad: "I hope soon to be able to issue a *Medical Mission Circular*, which will be useful to all of you who labour abroad, and will save me a vast amount of writing. I am always anxious to give you some idea of what John, and Val., and other old friends are doing; but I have not time to write, and re-write, and write over again. It never occurred to me to lithograph in such a case; but that dear, good lady, Miss Mackenzie, who has done so much for Medical Missions, not only lodged the idea in my cranium, but has promised to bear the expense. It is proposed to issue about one hundred copies each month, if possible about the 16th or 17th, that they may be despatched by the 19th to every medical missionary. The remainder will be circulated amongst our warmest friends. The *Circular* will not interfere with *Christian Work*, which is introducing us to many new friends, nor with any private communication we may desire to make to each other. The idea is to save endless labour by lithographing instead of writing. It will contain what we would write, if we could, about ourselves, and all your fellow-labourers in the same good work."

It was greatly appreciated, both in its lithographed and later in its printed form, by my Medical Missionary brethren. Dr. Elmslie writes: "Our little Medical Mission friend, the *Journal*, is always a welcome

visitor with me. Indeed, it often comes in just when I most need a word of comfort. I feel greatly stimulated and encouraged when I hear of what others are doing for our unspeakably precious Saviour and a perishing world. The labour you spend on the *Journal* is well spent. It is a great and necessary work to be fishing for new labourers, but it is an equally great and necessary work that those who are already in the field do their work contentedly, patiently, joyfully, lovingly, and faithfully. Your little *Journal* helps me, in some measure, so to work. Ever welcome, therefore, be our little friend ! ”

There were many little worries connected with the lithographing which we had not anticipated, so I resolved to have a regularly printed Magazine. Of course I asked the Directors to take it up, as regret had been expressed by them in one Report, “ That interesting communications, which they received from the foreign field, cannot be seen and read by all their contributors.” I also mentioned that I never gave a Lecture without feeling the want of some means of keeping alive the interest awakened. I told my audience that there was a notice of Medical Missions in *Christian Work*, but could not ask them to take that periodical because a small corner of it was consecrated to us. The Directors quite realized the importance of my statements ; but they did not see their way, at that juncture, to start a Magazine of their own ; so I issued, as Proprietor and Editor, on the 20th October, 1865, the first number of the *Medical Missionary*

Journal. The preface ran thus: "The object of this *Journal* is to promote the cause of Medical Missions. It is proposed to issue it about the 17th of each month, in time for the foreign mail for the East, *via* Southampton. The size of the *Journal* may vary with the amount of matter in hand, and especially with the time at my disposal to prepare matter for the press. The *Journal* has no official character, and for its contents I shall be personally responsible." By this last statement the Directors were saved from all responsibility for the contents. The *Journal* was warmly welcomed by all friends of Medical Missions, and was an immense help to me—that is, to the interests of the Society—when I was lecturing. The Society commended it in every Report, and the following extract will show the truly friendly spirit in which it was conducted.

"During the past year an interest has been kept up, as far as possible, by means of the two publications mentioned in former Reports—*Christian Work*, published monthly by Messrs. Strahan and Co., London; and the *Medical Missionary Journal*, issued by Mr. Burns Thomson. These *media* of information are both of great service, and do not interfere with each other, care being taken that, as a general rule, the communications are not the same. *Christian Work* is intended chiefly for those who do not see the publications of our Society; while the *Journal* circulates chiefly amongst our Subscribers. Every letter suited for the public eye is sent to one or other

of these periodicals ; and when there is no communication which admits of being printed, something else is always to be found in their pages bearing more or less closely upon the subject of Medical Missions.

CHAPTER XXI

THE SPREAD OF INTEREST: LECTURING ETC

WHEN I began work in connection with the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society, the blessed form of service they sought to promote was very imperfectly known, and of course was very inadequately supported. It was my desire, so far as my strength would permit, to spread the knowledge of it, through the country by lecturing, and through the City by Lady Collectors.

This lecturing was a service of love to Christ. Had it been hinted at as a part of my duty to the Society, I would never have entered "39," Cowgate. Not only did it involve the provision of supply for as much of my work as could be transferred, and a return to an accumulation of duties, but one Lecture told more on my health than any three ordinary days' work, and I never made one of these public appearances without suffering from an exhausting drain on the system.

I sought to interest the audience, not merely at the moment in order to get as liberal a collection as possible, but with the view of organizing a financial

auxiliary. This latter purpose was greatly facilitated after the *Medical Missionary Journal* made its appearance, for it kept alive the interest.

My first Lecture was delivered in December, 1860, at Dunse, where my beloved friend, Rev. John Fordyce, was minister of the Free Church. I went there because I knew he would give me valuable hints regarding my performance, which would be useful on future occasions. That first effort realized five pounds. Sometimes a Director went with me, and that, of course, added great weight to the whole proceedings; but no one accompanied me so frequently as Professor Miller. On one occasion we went together to Paisley; but, alas! there was some great source of attraction that night in the town, which was announced by immense placards, whilst our meeting was advertised by "bills not larger," said Professor Miller, "than the crown of my hat." The attendance was miserable; but we did our best to interest them, and that meeting was the beginning of a capital auxiliary in Paisley.

When the Professor and I went together, I gave the Lecture, and he gave what he called "The Clincher"; and truly he had a marvellous power of presenting a subject in a clear and impressive manner. His last public appearance was at Dalkeith, and it was on behalf of Medical Missions.

To save expense in travelling, I tried as much as was possible, when the places were distant, to arrange two or three meetings on consecutive evenings. Thus

I lectured at Ayr, Kilmarnock, and Irvine. These consecutive meetings were very hard upon me ; moreover, I got drenched at Irvine, and returned home ill.

This leads me to notice a curious fact: my lecturing weather was almost always unfavourable. The prince of the power of the air knew well that nothing would tend so rapidly to overthrow his kingdom as the progress of Medical Missions, and no doubt he did his utmost to get permission to thwart our efforts. On one occasion, Dr. Omond, Dr. Paterson, and I went to Perth, to hold what we hoped would be a large and influential meeting. The weather was so wet and boisterous that the expected Chairman never appeared ; and for some time after the hour of meeting, we had three of an audience, and three of a deputation. I suggested that we should take one each, and thoroughly indoctrinate him. A few more came in presently, and I slipped into the precentor's desk, and began by saying, "If we had had an audience to-night, I would have said so and so." At length about thirty gathered round us, we appointed a Chairman, and proceeded regularly.

My friend, Provost Breingan, of Helensburgh, arranged three meetings for me at Dumbarton, Helensburgh, and Greenock. The weather was dreadful : fierce wind, and torrents of rain. At Dumbarton we had eight of an audience, including the door-keeper. Next evening, at Helensburgh, the attendance was rather better, but wofully different from what we expected. The third day the storm was so

violent, we feared we should be obliged to go round by train. We ventured to cross, however ; but on landing in Greenock it was impossible to use an umbrella. Towards five o'clock the sun began to show his face, the wind fell, the rain ceased, and we had a beautiful evening. There was a grand meeting, eight ministers on the platform. The subject was "My Medical Mission in Madagascar." I was never in the same condition of mind before, or since, as I was that night. The Lord seemed to say to me, "Be strong, and of a good courage; the enemy shall not triumph." My whole inner being seemed to expand. I do not understand it, and of course cannot explain it. I felt it was not I that spoke that night, but God that spoke by me. Besides the collection, several gentlemen handed me contributions privately; and Messrs. Lyle and Scott, sugar refiners, promised me each £50 a year for three years, towards the education of a native student. These lecturings were continued with more or less frequency so long as I remained in Scotland, and they yielded fruit to the good of the cause after I was laid aside.

Regarding the diffusion of information respecting our cause throughout the city, I wished to secure a band of Christian Ladies, who would place a copy of our Report in every respectable house in town, to be called for after a week or ten days. This would assuredly help to make the work of the Society known, and experience was teaching us that the more it was known the better it was supported.

By way of experiment, and not in any way to interfere with the Ladies' Committee, I arranged with Dr. Omond to draw a line across College Street and Chalmers Street, and that no paid collector was to go south of that line. After carefully dividing that part of the City into districts, I set thirteen kind Christian Ladies to work upon it with most encouraging results. I should have been glad of assistance in dividing the other three quarters of Edinburgh in the same manner; but as no help was forthcoming, it was two or three years before I was able to overtake it. The labour was hard, but the reward sweet, as there was a marked and steady improvement in the finance.

CHAPTER XXII

"HELPERS IN CHRIST JESUS :"

DR. COLDSTREAM AND PROFESSOR MILLER

MEDICAL Missions were advocated in this country in 1841, by Dr. Parker from America. Societies were formed in London, Liverpool, Edinburgh, and Glasgow ; but they all passed away except at Edinburgh, and it is my firm belief it would have done so also, had it not been for the quiet, unostentatious services rendered to the cause by Dr. John Coldstream. For a number of years the Society lived in him.

"We do injustice to nobody when we aver, from an intimate personal acquaintance with the Society in every stage of its progress, that the warm, steady flame of Christian zeal which glowed within the breast of that calm, enlightened, and unselfish man of God kept the machinery of the Institution agoing during many long years of discouragement, when as yet the close affinity betwixt healing the sick and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom was imperfectly recognised by even well-informed and earnest Christians." ¹ While another writer says : "He was one of

¹ *Daily Review*, 29th September, 1863.

the founders of the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society, and omitted no opportunity of advancing its interests. When it was first started, a number of years ago, not a few prejudices had to be met ; and certainly the Society was fortunate in having in its Secretary one who, in the person of Dr. Coldstream, did much, both by his pen, and still more by the Christian graces which adorned his character, to overcome them, and to commend the Society to the support of members of all Christian denominations.”¹

As the Rev. James Lewis, his minister in Leith, latterly of Rome, in the introductory remarks to Dr. Coldstream’s Biography, briefly says : “ It were not too much to say of him, in relation to the Medical Mission, as it was said of Washington in reference to his country, ‘ He rose with the sun to pray for it, fought for it at the meridian, and watched for it at midnight.’ These were the early days of the cause ; and God only knows how the servant whom He had prepared for the work which was to be done served Him heartily and faithfully in it.”

He became Hon. Secretary when the Society and the Mission Dispensary in the Cowgate were united ; and we had not only much official, but much friendly, and to me profitable intercourse. Our views were not always the same ; but that did not disturb our mutual regard.

He died 17th September, 1863. His services had

¹ *Witness*, 22nd September, 1863.

all been honorary, and seeing he had laboured so lovingly, so faithfully and so long, I waited anxiously day after day to hear of some movement fitted to indicate an appreciation of what he had done. I waited in vain. Having a strong conviction that his memory ought to be kept living in connection with an agency for which he had done so much, I ventured to consult some friends of his and my own, and was gratified to find how cordially the proposal was hailed to raise a modest sum, the interest of which would be applied to cover the annual expense of the education and training of a pious youth as a Medical Missionary. As the medical curriculum only lasts four sessions, there would, by this means, be turned into the mission-field every fourth year a young gentleman, thoroughly equipped, to labour for Christ as a Medical Missionary.

The business was gone about in the quietest possible manner, and applications were made to a comparatively small number ; but in due time a sum was raised for investment for the Coldstream Memorial Medical Missionary Scholarship, which was handed to his son, John Coldstream, Esq., W.S., who made the requisite arrangement for its administration.

As mentioned in a previous chapter, Professor Miller was lecturing with me at Dalkeith, on the 11th of May, 1864, and on the 17th of June he was called to his rest. He became Chairman of the Dispensary Committee when Dr. Coldstream became Secretary. He was a help to me beyond what I can ever indicate,

and stood by me and strengthened me in all my progressive movements ; and when he was taken away, I threw myself down before God, and cried like the prophet, " Let me die, and not live, for I can struggle no more." Knowing how much he was loved and esteemed by the Lady Emma Campbell, I wrote to her on the 25th—a week after the decease—suggesting that she should move in the direction of a Memorial " to perpetuate the memory of one of the noblest and best men that ever lived."

We met to talk over the matter, and as she cordially approved of something being done, I drew up the following letter, which was lithographed for circulation :—

" EDINBURGH, 4th July, 1864.

" DEAR MADAM,—

" It is not possible to estimate the loss the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society has sustained in the death of Professor Miller. He stood at the head of all our forward movements, encouraging and directing, our warm friend, our eloquent advocate, our judicious counsellor. For many years he was one of our Presidents, he was Chairman of the Board of Directors of this Dispensary, and for well-nigh five years one of its acting medical officers. The last public duty he performed was to lecture at Dalkeith, on behalf of this cause. The burden of his address that night was the value of this Training School, and the important relations it sustains to the numerous

Medical Mission Dispensaries that are now being scattered over the world.

"It was one of the purposes of his life, an object for which he prayed and worked, to get this central Institution fully equipped, and put in thorough working order, believing that this was the best means of enabling the Society to give due attention to the ever-increasing claims of the foreign field. But he is gone, and the blow falls heavily upon us. I need not say how much it would comfort and encourage us were your proposal realized of raising a moderate endowment at once to keep alive the remembrance of our noble friend, and to carry out his wishes respecting the thorough equipment of this Institution.

"I cannot detail what may be necessary for this purpose, but the matter will be very easily adjusted if, through the efforts of his sorrowing and admiring friends, the state of our finances be improved.

"I can affirm confidently that I know nothing that would have given the Professor more real satisfaction than the success of your proposed movement; and I know no Institution more deserving the sympathy and support of the friends of humanity and religion than this, over which he so long and affectionately watched.

"Awaiting with prayerful interest the result of your effort, I am, etc.

"W. B. T."

I promised to do as much of the drudgery work as

possible, and soon after the above had been circulated a little band of loving hearts were at work collecting, amongst whom the Rev. W. Arnot, the Lady Mary Hamilton, the Honourable Mrs. Mackenzie, Mrs. Main, and Rev. Dr. Guthrie were prominent. Soon a sum of money was realized sufficient to carry out the object aimed at—viz., better accommodation, and a qualified assistant.

The Directors agreed to take a lease of the dwelling-house and workshop behind No. "39," and to grant a small sum out of the Memorial Fund to make the alterations necessary to fit them for our use. The dwelling-house was excellent, and had already been prepared for occupation by the students.

When the repairs and alterations were completed, we had two large, dry, well-ventilated, well-lighted rooms—a waiting-room and a doctor's room. In the one the patients assembled, in the other they were examined. The poor people were now able to get their medicine and advice at one visit: a matter about which I had long prayed.

The second benefit flowing from the Memorial—a qualified assistant—I thanked God for with my whole heart. One of my own pupils was appointed, who had lived with me in the Cowgate for two years. He knew the place, the people, and the work, and I knew him, and welcomed him to his honourable and responsible position as a brother in Christ, who heartily co-operated with me in praying and working to win souls for Jesus.

Some years later the need of new premises for the Mission became very pressing on account of changes in our neighbourhood that threatened to plunge us into darkness. A special appeal was made to accomplish that purpose, and the money received being added to the Miller Memorial Fund already in hand, the Directors were enabled to purchase the conveniently situated and commodious house, 56, George Square, as a Home for the Superintendent and his student family, and that is now known as the Miller Memorial Mission House.

LATER YEARS

THE PARTING FROM "39"

NOW we touch—and very briefly—on what without doubt was the most painful and testing crisis of Dr. Thomson's Medical Missionary career, the dissolution of his connection with the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society, and with the Cowgate work, in which the Lord had used him and honoured him so abundantly. This work in the Cowgate, with all its developments, was Dr. Thomson's own—his Isaac—and was dear to him as his own life.

The hour had come, however, when, on what was to himself a vital matter of principle, he had to face its surrender. He did not hesitate; and those who knew the man and what it cost him recognise in his sterling fidelity to principle on this occasion a crowning proof of that holy obedience which made him what he was—*a mighty man of God*.

In 1870 he writes: "Some time ago I asked Christian friends to remember me very specially in prayer. I have been hearing that my request has been remembered in very touching ways. One invalid, taking the *Journal* into a wood, laid it, as

Hezekiah did of old, before the Lord, crying, ' Lord, give him what he wants ! '

" God, who is the hearer of prayer, I trust, will give me what I want, as I want nothing but the advancement of the cause to which He led me to consecrate my life, and which He has already so much prospered and blessed.

" I must explain. It is now well-nigh eleven years since I started the Training Institution. It was originated by myself, and the pecuniary responsibility, from first to last, of the boarding of the students has rested on my shoulders ; and the working of it all along has been a service of love rendered to Jesus. I was engaged by the Society merely to work a Dispensary, which the Missionary students were to attend at stated times. As I have told before, very brief experience showed me the utter worthlessness of that arrangement ; and in imitation of the Master, I wished the students to live with me, and be members of my family.

" The blessing of God has secured a most encouraging measure of success, but it has been realized in the midst of difficulties, which cannot be conceived. During the greater part of these years I was not the head of my own house, yet I was held responsible for things I was powerless to remedy."

A few weeks later Dr. Burns Thomson says : " This is my last *Journal* from ' 39,' Cowgate. I have resolved to lay out my energies for the advancement of Medical Missions apart from all committees.

“I may do much, or I may do little—that is entirely in the hand of God—but I shall be free from many hindrances which during the last eleven years have retarded this blessed work.

“The Madagascar Medical Mission, with four agents, is recognised as distinctly a scheme of my own, and will stand by itself as heretofore.

“The Nursing scheme is also in my own hands, and excellent premises have been secured for a Missionary Nurses’ Home in the Canongate, where their services are much needed.

“In addition to the usual instruction given to ‘monthly nurses,’ my object will be to prepare the five nurses now with me for service in rural districts or the foreign field, where medical skill is entirely wanting. Other departments of the work (bearing on the progress of Medical Missions at home and abroad) earnestly engage my attention; but during this transition period I am silent regarding them, that not being in any way committed, I may be absolutely free to follow God’s guiding.

“Suffice it to say that, in addition to the above, I contemplate opening a Dispensary and Training Institution.”

In *Medical Missions at Home and Abroad*, June, 1893, in a paper written immediately after Dr. Burns Thomson’s death, the Editor thus comments on the circumstances which led to Dr. Thomson’s retirement from the Cowgate:—

“Enough has been said to show how this Great-

heart of Medical Missions was ever in the van of his Society, ready at the call of God to look at any scheme that promised to bring glory to His Master, never sparing himself, but ready to spend and to be spent for His sake. In 1870 the time came when he felt constrained to part from the Society, whose operations he had done so much to confirm, and enlarge, and ennoble. We shall not be misunderstood when we say that it was impossible for such a man as our noble friend to do anything else than he did. It was a question of authority in his own house. A right of appeal in matters of dispute between a Superintendent and his students must of course exist to the Directorate, which is over both. But in such a case, if the Superintendent's authority is not upheld, his influence is gone. Except in cases of the plainest injustice, a wise Directorate would ignore such appeals. And in the case of one whose whole soul was bound up with the encouragement of good men, and whose one longing was to see them fit for the field, and who was ready to share a crust with the poorest student rather than that he should be kept back, it might have been supposed that in such matters he would be trusted to the uttermost. Such was not the case. A student was upheld as against the Superintendent. Burns Thomson resigned, *and he did right*. But the foundation work was finished, and it mattered less who now should take his place. Good men have risen up since, in whose hands the E.M.M. has been widely extended, and we thank God for them. But

we specially praise Him to-day for the unique man, Burns Thomson, whom He raised up to fulfil the high office of giving Medical Missions a name and a place in the Church of Christ such as it possesses at this hour."

After the removal to St. John Street, Canongate, Dr. Burns Thomson writes, in June, 1871 :—

"It seems right to say a few words to satisfy friendly inquiries as to what I have been doing since I transferred the centre of my operations to this part of the City, and prepared to develop, apart from all Societies, those views of Medical Missions which I gathered from the Word of God and from an instructive experience.

"The time of transition was a time of trial, but also a time of blessing. It is when we reach the end of our wisdom and our might that God gets suitable opportunity for impressing us with His wisdom and His might ; and it is infinitely sweeter to bear a heavy trial with much of His presence than to meet even a trifling difficulty in our own strength. I have learned more in these past six or eight months of my Bible, my Saviour, myself, and my fellow-man than in any half-dozen years of my life.

"I never can tell all that God has done for me during these trying days ; but 'He is faithful who hath promised.' Let me just say this : the Master has made it plain that He has work for me to do towards the furtherance of this blessed cause, and that He has granted me exactly what I asked from man, and what

man refused; ¹ and yet not exactly, for He has given something *over* and *above* what was asked—‘*good measure.*’”

Of this separation the Rev. John Fordyce, who was intimately acquainted with Burns Thomson’s work, by observation and correspondence from the first day till the crisis, writes as follows :—

“As all, or nearly all, who directed or conducted the Mission prior to 1870 have been translated from this controversial world to the home of perfect harmony, it would be out of place to revive the discussions of 1870 and ’71; but something must be recorded of the greatest trial of Burns Thomson’s life.

“Such had been the intensity of his earnestness in his work at ‘39,’ Cowgate, and his enthusiasm about the objects of the Medical Missionary Society, that to leave both gave him more pain than can ever be told.

“I was with him at ‘39’ in the spring of 1870, when I was about to leave for Simla. Just then the probability dawned upon him of a separation. Bursting into tears, he exclaimed, ‘I cannot leave “39.” When I die, “39” will be found written on my heart!’ He left the Society, but not the Mission he loved so well.

“To many he was like ‘Luke the beloved physician.’”

¹ In later years he often said, “I asked nothing of my committee that Dr. Maxwell is not now getting from his London one, ‘Freedom to work in the cause of Christ.’”

Christian friends in Edinburgh and elsewhere rallied round him, and sustained him in carrying on a mission in another part of the City, preaching the Gospel, healing the sick, and also training Missionaries 'in his own hired house.' ”

THE CANONGATE

“BRANDS PLUCKED FROM THE BURNING”

DR. BURNS THOMSON made no delay in commencing Medical Mission work in the Canongate. The inhabitants of this district had been arranging to send a petition to the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society with a plea for a branch Dispensary there, just at the very time when he came to settle among them.

Our extracts are taken from the *Journal* and from his letters.

“On coming here I began Dispensary work at once, having secured a house fairly well suited for that purpose. Professional brethren who had laboured with me in past years offered me their help, and several students desired to be associated with me for the benefit of the practice. This district is large and needy, and the patients are already as numerous as I would ever desire them to be.

“The Irish element is less here than I have been accustomed to. Drunkenness is very prevalent, and cleanliness not up to my expectations. Poverty and wretchedness abound, but the bearing of the patients while the Bible is being read is respectful, and many

seem impressed. I have not begun all my usual classes or meetings, thinking it better to wait until I am acquainted with the extent and character of the religious appliances around me."

In 1874, Dr. Thomson was able to secure much more suitable premises, which enabled him to extend his labours. Speaking of the new premises, he says :—

"Here there is accommodation for carrying into effect some of my long-cherished schemes for the extension of Medical Missions at Home and Abroad.

"Here I can open a small Hospital to enable me more perfectly to develop these plans, and I have engaged a devoted young doctor, whose sacrifices in becoming a Medical Missionary have proved his hearty love of this form of service."

At this time Dr. Thomson's noble band of fellow-workers were a great strength to him, and in the following notes of cases we are to keep in mind especially the valued presence and help of his right-hand man, Dr. Crabbe, now of the Birmingham Medical Mission.

"We are cheered by the manifest interest of the patients in Divine things, and the moving amongst the dry bones is patent to all associated with me here. The effect of this upon us all, the young doctor, the ladies, the nurses, and the students, is to produce a spirit of hopefulness, and prayer."

Some more examples of fruit we extract from the Canongate notes.

“HE WAS QUITE A NEW MAN ALTOGETHER.”

A——W—— was a young man suffering from acute rheumatism. He was very intelligent and frank, but he did not know Christ. He told me, after I had prescribed for him, that he had been thinking much about the state of his soul, but felt he was not prepared to leave this world yet. His feelings were the difficulty; but I told him he was not asked to *feel*, but to *believe* on the Lord Jesus Christ. He thought he had something great and complicated to do before he could be saved, but I tried to show him that he must simply trust in Jesus. I did not leave him, poor fellow, till he understood the way of peace; and not long after he told me that, now that he knew Jesus as his Saviour, he was quite a new man altogether.

“I AM WITH YOU.”

An old man of seventy was dying of chronic bronchitis. He was very low, and I told him he must be thinking about another world. “Yes, Doctor,” he said, “I am dying; I don’t expect to be here long.” “But ‘are you prepared to die?’” “Yes, I think so. I have been attending the Dispensary for a long time,” he said, “and one day the old doctor (Dr. Thomson) spoke to us from the 23rd Psalm, and from that day I have put my trust in Jesus, and in Him I am quite prepared for death.” “Have you no fear?” I asked. “Oh, no; I have His

promise, 'I am with you'; and even when I am dreaming, His presence is still with me." Soon the good old man was in glory.

"A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM."

It was with difficulty the nurse reached Mrs. —, who lived in a miserable attic, made up almost entirely of the roof and floor, the wall being quite rudimentary and not higher than the skirting in ordinary dwellings. The roof was perforated with holes, some of them so large that they could hardly be distinguished from the original skylight, which was now without glass. The poor woman presented an aspect of inexpressible dejection. She had lost her only daughter; and a glance at the bed showed the corpse of the little one still undressed. The child was dead: the mother knew no more. She was utterly ignorant of the life that is brought to light in the Gospel, and she listened with a sort of joyous bewilderment whilst the nurse told of the Saviour's love for the little ones; how He took them in His arms and blessed them; that in Him "the lambs are all safe"—"of such is the kingdom of heaven." A glimmering of truth stole in upon her desolate heart; and, in the gracious Saviour, she not only ventured to think of safety for her child, but to have hope for herself. Many opportunities the nurse had afterwards of instructing her in the way of life. She began to teach her boys about Christ, and, not long after, one of them was called to follow his little

sister ; but the mother was now sustained by truths to which on the former occasion of trial she was a stranger. Her daily life gives evidence that she stays herself on the living God.

“ GREAT SALVATION.”

W—— came to the Dispensary for advice. When in his prime, he must have been a splendid fellow—tall, well-built, handsome ; but now, alas ! he is nothing but the dregs of a drunkard. His clothing is so scanty and tattered, he risks being taken up for improperly exposing his person. As his ailment is serious, he is promised attendance at home. But what a home ! When I write of broken tables, three-legged chairs, rags, and dirt, our readers may sometimes be tempted to think that the picture is slightly coloured ; but here there is no room for colouring, for there is nothing to paint. The room contains nothing—absolutely nothing—no semblance of a bed, not even a splinter of furniture nor a fragment of crockery ; and the corner of the floor on which W—— is seated is not a whit more eligible than any of the other three corners.

The Infirmary is of course suggested at once ; but prejudice is far too strong for reason, and W—— must be treated where he is. The young Missionary doctor is sorely puzzled, not knowing how or where to begin with a case for which every necessary must be provided ; and when he looks at the wreck of a man crumpled up in the corner, panting for breath

and his ill-clad, sorrowing wife weeping at his side, a sense of helpless hopelessness begins to creep over his heart, and the cry rises to his lips, "What's the use?" How differently he thinks of the case somewhat later! Our supply of requisites for such cases is not scanty this season; and, as the Invalid Soup Kitchen is in full working order, W—— got an honest chance for recovery. Spiritual instruction was not forgotten, and it was needed, as W—— had not been to church for fifteen years. But we dismiss details, and merely record the fact that the gracious Saviour, who came to seek and to save the lost, laid His loving hand on that poor outcast creature in the corner, drew him to His heart, and saved him with the "Great Salvation." And not only so, but the wife too has been brought to Jesus, and rejoices in His grace.

"MAN, I SEE IT!"

W—— had a brother as poor as himself, but he sank through misfortune, rather than wickedness. Seeing the reality of the blessing that sustained and gladdened his brother's heart, he said to the Missionary doctor, "Man, I would like fine to get what W—— has got," and so he began to attend the daily address in the Dispensary. One day, at the close of a very simple statement of the Gospel, he rushed up to the doctor, and, with tears in his eyes, exclaimed, "I see it! I see it!" And every time since, when

he meets him, he says, with an air of joyous astonishment, "Man, I see it!"

"IT'S ONLY CHRIST."

O—— G—— was dismissed from the Infirmary incurable; but, as his ailment was consumption, he lived a considerable time after falling into our hands. Through continued intercourse a warm attachment sprang up between G—— and his medical attendant, and this made their religious converse the more interesting and profitable; and there is no doubt that, though G—— was a Roman Catholic, he got himself freed from all the helps popery gives to the finished work of Christ, and rested on Him alone for salvation. This was brought out with gratifying distinctness on the occasion of my last visit. It was late, and I had almost forgotten to call. On entering the room, I found him sitting in bed and struggling hard for breath; but when he saw me the painfully anxious expression of countenance gave place to a very pleasing smile, that evidenced the deep satisfaction the visit afforded him. "I have been watching the window," he said, "all day, doctor, to see you pass, and only a little ago gave up all hope of ever meeting you here again." But there was no doubt of our meeting again in another and a better land; and when we communed of the grounds of that blessed hope, he frequently ejaculated, "It's only Christ, it's only Christ!"

“ANSWER FOR ANY OF MY SINS?”

A—— F—— has been attending the Dispensary for some time at the private hour for bandaging, etc., so that the opportunity of personal dealing with him about his soul was excellent. Although he confessed that he was not a Christian, he seemed anxious to become one if he only knew the way. On one occasion the conversation was taken up about the Saviour's great work of substitution—that He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. The truth, for the first time, appeared fairly to grasp him ; but, as it seemed too good to be true, he put a question that showed his outstanding difficulty. “Suppose,” he said, “I should be accidentally killed on my way home, would I, through Christ, get to heaven, and would I not need to answer (“answer”—that was the difficulty) for any of my sins?” He was told that if the Gospel brought assurance of anything, it brought assurance of the glorious truth, that Immanuel “answers” for all who put their trust in Him. From that day F—— was a new man. The truth seemed clearly to possess his soul—“Christ for me.”

“I AM NOT PREPARED.”

J—— M—— was a soldier, who had fought bravely the battles of his country, and wore with no little pride his well-earned honours ; but, alas ! he had also fought hard in the service of the “prince of this world,”

and the only laurel (?) earned in that service was a shattered constitution. When I saw him, he was suffering from extreme breathlessness, which he said had come on suddenly three days before, when taking a walk. The wretched little place, on the floor of which he lay, was only a corner partitioned off from what had formerly been a lobby ; and, as it had no direct communication with the external atmosphere, it cost him a terrible struggle to get into his lungs so much of the surrounding impure air as could suffice to keep in the life. An examination of the chest soon made it very evident that his life must be estimated, not by days, but by hours, and it was my painful duty to inform him of the gravity of his illness.

The information given, with the utmost tenderness, was received in silence, which lasted a considerable time. At length he said, in a very earnest tone, " Sir, to meet death is a thing for which I am not prepared." He had oftentimes faced it before unflinchingly in storms of shot and shell ; but now there was no excitement to distract, and " Pale Death," tapping at his poor tabernacle, made him quail. I sought to direct the sufferer, as best I could, to Him who can save to the uttermost ; and earnestly commended him in prayer to the grace of God. I never saw him again. He frequently called for me during the night, and was evidently thinking, so far as his fast-fading consciousness would permit, of the long-neglected Saviour ; but that is all of hopefulness we can utter.

“BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHICH DIE IN THE LORD.”

Mrs. B—— was a woman of sterling piety and large experience in the ways of God. Such a woman as the Home Missionary loves to have in his district, that, when faint and weary through his terribly real tussle with abounding ungodliness, he may drop in upon her for a mouthful of refreshment to cheer him on. Like all the followers of the man with the bitten heel, she had many trials, and it was not one of the least that Robert, her husband, was not only unconverted, but unmistakably too fond of his dram. No doubt he came home in decent hours, and listened dutifully to the customary lecture ; yea, the following morning, more emphatically than the wife, he lectured himself, and then—and then went back to his dram. Sad enough. But Robert was the subject of many prayers, and they that wait on the Lord shall not be put to shame. One day, when I was visiting Mrs. B——, who suffered from advanced disease of the heart, I felt constrained to speak of Christ and His salvation ; and Robert was present. I was out of sorts that day, and left so dissatisfied with my attempt to commend the Saviour that I heartily wished I had been silent. Imagine, then, the interest and delight with which I learned on my next visit that the truth, uttered in hesitation and weakness, had made such an impression on Robert that Mrs. B—— begged me to follow it up with direct personal dealing, which I did

cheerfully and often. At this juncture circumstances withdrew me from the family for fully three months ; but, at the end of that period, an urgent message came to me to go and see Mrs. B——, as she was just dying. I was soon at the bedside, and was greatly struck by the ravages disease had made upon her, but the intellect was clear and her hopes were bright. She grasped my extended hand, and, after pressing it to her lips, said, “ Doctor, I could not die until I had seen you and blessed you. You were the instrument, in God’s hand, of the conversion of Robert. He is in heaven to-day, and I shall soon be with him. Short was the time allowed him for growth in grace, but he soon outstripped me,” etc. She was dying, and yet she and I both felt she could never die. How different my feelings in bidding her good-bye from those experienced when bidding farewell to the dying soldier ! “ Truly blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”

“THE BLESSED BIBLE IS THE BEST.”

Very comforting and strengthening it is to meet cases like that of J—— M——. Left an orphan when about twelve years of age, with no heritage save her mother’s prayers, she strove to support herself by envelope-folding. A godly woman has kept her for five or six years, not to make money by her, or get assistance from her, but purely for the sake of Him who said, “ Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, My brethren, ye did it unto

Me." She looks for no reward, and expects none but His blessing ; and, in taking that orphan girl to her home, she finds that she has been entertaining an angel unawares. J—— cannot tell precisely when she first knew her Saviour, but she says, "It matters little, so long as I do know Him, and I am as sure of that as that I am lying here." When speaking to her of her disease (consumption), she said, "She once thought she would like to live till she was old ; but now she didn't mind, as she would be the sooner with her Saviour." Her calm trust in Him is beautiful, and it is one of my greatest pleasures to run in and spend a short time with her. She is generally surrounded with tracts and hymns, but the Bible is scarcely ever seen out of her hand. "These are all good," she says, "but the blessed Bible is the best."

"OLD GRANNIE."

Four years ago, a grandson of "Old Grannie," as we familiarly called her among us, took ill and died. He was a lad about seventeen. During his illness the truth was blessed by the Divine Spirit, all the gloom vanished from his face, and he became happy, even joyous, in the near prospect of death. A New Testament had been given him, and out of it he used to read to "Grannie," who was a very ignorant Papist, and who was sorely puzzled by her boy's "new-fangled notions." That he was changed for the better was clear to "Grannie," and to every one. The lad quietly slipped away home to glory, and

“Grannie” got as her heritage “the New Testament,” of which she could not read a line.

Unsettled, but unsaved, she crept round to the Dispensary address, seldom missing a day for nearly two years. The simple expositions were of use to her; and when any one visited her, “the New Testament” was at once produced, with a request that we would read about the blessed Saviour, in whom, like her grandson, she had learned to rejoice. Dear “Grannie” is now very frail, but very happy. She is sitting on the brink of the river, waiting for Christ to ferry her across to the land of rest. She longs to “depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.”

“I’LL MEET HIM UP YONDER.”

Sarah came to me nearly three years ago in the first stage of consumption. Soon I had the joy of seeing her give her heart to Christ. She sought to commend the Saviour, who had brought such sunshine into her soul, to her companions and friends. She has just passed away, and the following jotting has been handed me by the nurse. “She was very low when I last saw her, and I said, ‘You will soon be at rest now.’ She whispered softly, ‘Rest, rest, rest.’ Then with a great effort, ‘Bid dear Dr. Thomson good-bye for me.’ I said, ‘Yes, dear; anything else?’ She murmured a few words of prayer, of which I could only catch the word, ‘Father.’ Then she added, ‘Tell him I’ll meet him up yonder; I’ll be waiting for him.’ Her latter end was peace.”

“I COULD TRUST HIM BETTER FOR DYING THAN
FOR LIVING.”

The case of Rebecca is touching. Although only about two-and-twenty, she has suffered long, and must suffer longer still, and be worse than at present before she can be better. She has had a turn in most of our Hospitals, but when more urgent cases come in she is pushed aside. She came to the Dispensary at an unusual hour. Noticing the glistening eye and quivering lip, I rose to give her a kindly greeting, but that little act of kindness was too much for her overburdened heart. She fairly broke down, and her sobs long prevented her telling me her distress. The poor young creature was finding it hard thus to be poured from vessel to vessel.

“But, dear young friend,” I said, “don’t you love Jesus?” “Yes, I do,” she replied earnestly. “Then can you not trust Him?” “Yes,” she said, between her sobs, “but *I could trust Him better for dying than for living; my heart is sick.*”

Poor girl! she at once got an order for the Convalescent Home, and when that was closed for the winter, another place was provided for her; and her Heavenly Father is training her to trust Him for *living* as well as for *dying*.

LEAVING EDINBURGH

FOR some time Dr. Burns Thomson's friends had been urging him to withdraw from the burdens and anxiety of Dispensary and Hospital, on account of the enfeebled state of his health. Unwillingly he listened to these appeals, for dearly he loved his work; but by degrees, and very graciously, God showed him that his friends were right, and that set free from these duties he might still be useful in extending and deepening interest in the cause so near his heart. He resolved, therefore, to leave Edinburgh, going first to the South of France as advised for his health, and to wait upon God for future guidance.

When it became known among Dr. Burns Thomson's large circle of loving friends and fellow Christian workers, who warmly admired and esteemed him, that failing health compelled him most reluctantly to relinquish his active work in connection with Medical Missions, they deemed this a fitting opportunity to testify their admiration to the devotion and self-sacrifice he had shown throughout the prosecution of his remarkable labours. The result of this was that Dr. and Mrs. Burns Thomson were invited to a

meeting in the Bible Society's Rooms, St. Andrew's Square, where they were presented with £1,000, and an Illuminated Address, in which loving testimony was given of the warm appreciation felt by friends of the long and valuable services rendered by them to the sick-poor of Edinburgh.

These were presented by the Chairman, Charles Cowan, Esq., with words of cordial sympathy, bearing on his devoted, self-sacrificing labours in the cause of Medical Missions.

In reply, Dr. Burns Thomson thanked his friends most gratefully for the gift with which he had just been so unexpectedly honoured and enriched, and in which he knew there was a very large amount of genuine affection wrapped up. He spoke of the great joy granted him by God in his work, and of Medical Missions as the most Christ-like form of service man was ever privileged to undertake, combining as it did healing of the body with soul-winning. He closed with these words: "It is particularly gratifying to me that this gift is not presented to *me*, but to *us*. We have been in harness together, and since you have deemed it proper to enter on what has brought us here to-day, it seems only right we should stand side by side. Of the services rendered by my wife it is not expedient I should say much, but one point cannot well be passed over. Without any fuss, or affectation of self-sacrifice, she gave up her sweet home, in a delightful locality, and went to live and labour, without fee or reward, amid the din, the dirt,

and the devilry of the Cowgate. That step served to arrest the attention of the Christian public, to startle it into a measure of thoughtfulness regarding the value of our work, and to give an impulse to the cause of Medical Missions."

"Trust in the Lord, and do good ; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed."

MILDMAY AND LAST DAYS

WHEN the trial of leaving his precious work and the many old and loving friends in Edinburgh was over, Dr. Thomson, with his wife, passed two winters pleasantly and profitably in the Riviera. By that time his bodily vigour was in a measure restored and having received a cordial invitation to take up his abode at Mildmay, we find him settled there as a voluntary worker in the early summer of 1881.

He attempted no medical work, but confined himself to the holding of prayer-meetings, conducting evangelistic services, and having morning worship with the Deaconesses. These services were a great pleasure to himself, and were much appreciated. To be at Mildmay, at the centre of such a busy hive of Christian workers, interested him exceedingly.

During the last few years, as bodily infirmity increased, he was reluctantly compelled to lessen his labours, clinging almost to the end, however, to his expositions of Scripture in the Deaconess House at morning prayers. Preparation for this work was his daily delight. It brought him into close contact with the Divine Word, and he often gave thanks to God for the precious privilege of Bible study.

These latter years were truly happy. Referring to a quaint idea of the late Dr. Chalmers that when a man reached his seventh decade it ought to be the Sabbath of his life, he used to say, "This is my Sabbath. I have no worries ; my cup runneth over."

The following extract, which graphically describes these morning services in the Deaconess House, is taken from a recently published work, entitled "Mildmay ; or, The Story of the first Deaconess Institute," by Harriette J. Cooke, M.A., Boston :—

"It has been my privilege, during my stay at Mildmay, to become acquainted with Dr. Burns Thomson, who is '*the father of Home Medical Missions*,' and through whose influence and efforts this important work has been introduced into many lands ; and through it a great impetus has been given to foreign missions. He remarked, when I first met him, 'When I, a poor, worn-out doctor, was laid aside from my chosen work by broken health, the Lord gave me a home at Mildmay, where I have been permitted to live in touch with this noble Institution and to study God's Word in quiet and carry the message to the dear deaconesses, who have very little time to spend in study for themselves in their busy life among the poor and lost of this great city.'

"On Wednesday and Friday of each week, if you come to the Deaconess House in time for morning prayers, as you enter Room No. 6, you will see, on the stand, a table, with a great, open Bible and a vase of fresh flowers. Behind the table and facing the rows

of vacant seats you will see a gentleman, with snow-white hair and beard and very kind, bright eyes that are sure to see everything that is to be seen, waiting and watching keenly each worshipper as she quietly takes her place.

“The hymn is announced in such a feeble voice, and the whole appearance of the good man who is to conduct the service is so frail, you feel a little anxious lest he may not get through. It is Dr. Burns Thomson, and you need not be the least bit alarmed, for, before the hour of prayer is closed, you will find he is very much alive, and he has power to stir every one to new life. As he begins, his voice is interrupted by a little, worrying cough, and your whole attention is concerned for him. At length the cough ceases ; his feeble voice becomes like a trumpet note, strong and clear ; his broad Scotch accent will delight you ; all anxiety for the speaker is quite forgotten—your whole soul intent on the message, full of beauty and brightness, which he has brought for you and for every one present. He never forgets the servants, but with true kindness he makes them feel they are included in the family circle and are remembered by the Master who has sent the message. It is a pleasure to listen to a Scotchman who has brought down into this doubting age the clear-cut faith of old John Knox, who would not listen to anything short of the whole Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“These mornings are eagerly looked forward to by every deaconess, and the room, well filled with silent,

attentive listeners, is an inspiration to the good old doctor, who is fond of all these workers. He forgets his pain and weakness, and is filled with the 'spirit of wisdom and of a sound mind.' Though his message is so well received, it is no sentiment he gives. He preaches a practical Gospel, with a definite and sure aim ; and he makes the blessed Book glow and burn with a new light and a power which sends his listeners to their closets for self-examination, and to their work among the poor with a deep realization of the responsibility which they assume as deaconesses. It is a great help to every one privileged to hear these lessons, and a blessing to Mildmay. Recently he has been occupied one morning each week with the stories of Daniel or Gideon. His expositions are full of force and originality. His practical applications are so apt and so exactly suited to the latest date, that one can see he is alive to all that goes on in the political, as well as in the religious, world. His forceful illustrations call out smiles of approval, and serve to fix the truth he is teaching."

This little sketch of the happy, useful years spent at Mildmay by Dr. Burns Thomson would be incomplete without the closing passages written by Dr. Gauld, Superintendent of the Mildmay Hospital at Bethnal Green, which appeared in June, 1893, in "Service for the King."

"Dr. Thomson's first appearance at Mildmay was in the summer of 1869, when he delivered an address on Medical Missions at the Annual Conference.

That address was afterwards printed and widely circulated.

“ In 1878 he was compelled by failing health to give up his much-loved work in Edinburgh. Two years later he came on a visit to Mildmay, which ended in his finally settling there. He was instrumental in leading Mildmay to take up the Medical Mission work, which now forms so important a part of its many-sided operations ; he was also the means of inducing the writer to superintend the Bethnal Green Medical Mission. Dr. Thomson devoted himself to the instruction of the Deaconesses and others at Mildmay in Scripture truth, and was exceedingly helpful to many. His expositions of the Bible at Morning Prayers were greatly prized, and looked on as a special treat. His original and quaint way of expressing himself, the practical lessons for the daily life, which, unnoticed by others, seemed in his hand to start out from the passage, along with the deep spirituality of his teaching, were all felt to be very precious. He was a most interesting speaker, either to old or young.

“ As a wise friend and counsellor Dr. Thomson was in constant request ; and if any of the workers at Mildmay were in perplexity or trouble about either a point of doctrine or practice, it seemed the most natural thing to go and consult the Doctor. Seldom did any one come away from him without a lightened heart. Many a difficulty vanished before his judicious appeal to God’s Word and earnest supplication at the Throne of Grace. He was a firm believer in the power

of prayer, and it was his habit to take everything to the Lord for His help and guidance. For the last thirty years, during which it was our privilege to enjoy his friendship, we found him unfailing in his kindness. While possessed of a keen temperament, yet he had a most loving and tender spirit. His love for children was great, and having none of his own, his heart lavished its affection on the children of his friends.

“In his last days, when kept indoors by failing health, he continued to keep the Mildmay work and workers before God in prayer. One of our nurses about a year ago nursed him back to life from the very gates of death ; she has now gone to Jamaica as a Missionary. Her old patient always prayed for her in the words of one of his favourite hymns, slightly altered,—

‘ May her young heart be blessed
With Thy *sweet Spirit* for its guest.’

“Many times have we heard him thank God for His goodness in giving him, during his last ten or twelve years of life, such a congenial niche as ‘dear Mildmay.’ He greatly valued the opportunity it afforded him for the quiet study of his Bible. He felt very thankful also for the Christian atmosphere with which he was surrounded.

“When both Mrs. Pennefather and he were prevented by weakness from going to the house of God on the Lord’s day, Dr. Thomson would go over to the

‘elect lady,’ as he delighted to call her, and together they would spend an hour with God’s Word, praying for others and talking sweetly by the way. Both have now entered into the rest of the Eternal Sabbath.”

It only remains to add a few words about the last days. In September, 1892, increasing weakness compelled him to seek the milder climate of Bournemouth, and here the last seven months of his life were spent. It was anything but an idle time. At the urgent solicitation of friends, and especially Medical Missionary friends, he now began the “Reminiscences” which form the main feature of this volume ; and his final illness found him, happily, well through with his work. He was able on sunny days to go out, and to walk for a little among the pines ; and when friends visited him, he would throw himself, as of old, into all that was of mutual interest, and especially into anything bearing upon the cause that was so dear to him in its relation to the world-wide field. “It would be nice to get home,” however, was a word which not infrequently fell from his lips, and it showed how increasingly he was feeling the burden of his physical weakness. The counter-thought which troubled his loving heart was that he should leave his devoted wife to face the cold world alone. Both the one thought and the other had to be left, and they were left in his Saviour’s hands. A few days of sickness and suffering, and the end came on 29th April, 1893, when near the close of his 72nd year. His remains, followed by relatives and by Scotch and

Mildmay friends, were laid in the Cemetery at Bournemouth on Thursday, May 4th, in the sure hope of a blessed resurrection. The Rev. Dr. Dykes, whose ministry while in London he attended and greatly valued, conducted the funeral service.

“Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory.”

APPENDIX

A

A SKETCH BY REV. DR. COLIN VALENTINE, OF AGRA

[The following very interesting sketch is from the pen of the Rev. Dr. Colin Valentine, of Agra. We have felt it best to keep it by itself.—ED.]

I CAME to study medicine in Edinburgh in the winter of 1857-58, and was introduced to the Medical Mission Dispensary by a fellow-student. This work was quite a revelation to me, and interested me at once.

When the medical student who had been in charge at "39," Cowgate, resigned, I first heard the name of William Burns Thomson mentioned as the one man to be his successor.

He seemed to be well known in Edinburgh, not only as an earnest Christian worker, but as one who had also written about Medical Missions. By universal consent it was believed that if Thomson could be brought to the Cowgate Dispensary, its success, humanly speaking, would be ensured. The only doubt about his fitness for the appointment arose

from the state of his health. Constitutionally delicate, he had overworked whilst studying, and he was at that time resting with his brother, the Free Church minister of Kirriemuir.

I met him soon after his appointment, and have a very distinct recollection of his appearance. He was thin and slender, not tall, and had a slight stoop, which made him look shorter than he really was. He had a pale thin face, expressive large blue eyes, high forehead, and curly dark auburn hair. When at rest, he had a quiet, rather sad expression ; and when he moved about or talked, he gave you the impression of being very worn out, more fit to be in his bed, or lying on the braes of his own heather-clad hills, than to be undertaking the terribly difficult duties of Medical Mission work in the Cowgate of Edinburgh.

Having been trained as a druggist, I undertook to prepare the whole of the medicines, and also to help in making up the prescriptions. This brought me much in contact with Thomson ; and when we were preparing the stock tinctures, pills, and ointments, we had time for talking. Then the quiet man opened out in quite a new fashion, and would tell me of passages in his past life—about his conversion, about Golspie and his Highland school, his student life, and work in Calton Jail. Also he described his visits to patients, the houses they lived in, the people he came in contact with, the conversations he had with them, and all with raciness and humour, and with touches

of pathos and gleams of fun quite remarkable and peculiarly his own.

At times his feelings quite overpowered him, and he melted into tears as he described the state of some poor man's house.

"Oh, Val," he would say, "is it not awful to think that amidst all this squalor and ignorance these poor creatures in their heedlessness and indifference are passing away into the unseen world without a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ? Poor fellows! poor fellows! and they don't know Him."

The patients or their friends came between 6 and 7 p.m. for the medicines which had been prescribed. He knew each, and had a kind word or message to send to those at home. The kind words reached the hardened and most bigoted hearts, and tears of gratitude filled many eyes as they went back to their miserable dwellings, feeling that at least there was one man in the Cowgate who cared for them. He was their Friend, and that man's God was their Father as well as his. After the Dispensary was closed, and I had had a cup of tea with him, he would pray and talk with God as a man would to his friend.

I never knew a man who in prayer could so lift one out of all surroundings and bring one into the presence of God as Thomson could. We were soon fast friends, and I was much oftener in his company than my Dispensary work required.

At that time the Training Institution was not yet started; but Thomson was confident that if only the

Directors would acknowledge the principle, funds would be forthcoming to carry out his scheme. He asked me if I would come and live with him in the Cowgate, and be his assistant. I assented readily ; and when I had moved my belongings, he quaintly remarked,—

“ Merit will rise, Val. You have got to the Cowgate at last ! ”

Two other students, Stewart and Davidson, soon followed ; but it was not till some time later, and then only by the merest accident, we learned that Thomson had made himself responsible for our board.¹

Other students attended the Dispensary, and took outdoor practice ; but the working out of Thomson's scheme fell upon those of us who lived with him in the Dispensary. We were few in number, and as medical students we required, of course, to prepare for our classes. Cases poured in on us in such numbers that it was simply impossible to overtake them all. Thomson did all he could ; but when his strength was exhausted, and the neglected people were dying around us, he literally groaned in spirit, and poured out his heart in prayer to God for them.

The state of the Cowgate thirty-six or thirty-seven years ago was very different from what it is now. The drainage was very imperfect, and hundreds of people lived in what were literally no better than

¹ His salary at that time was only £100 a year !

cellars or dungeons. The inhabitants of these places belonged to the lowest strata of society: men and women huddled together in the most terrible state of misery and depravity. Then there were a number of old, and what had formerly been grand houses, which were crowded to overflowing. Many heart-rending scenes were we called upon to witness, and frequently, too, we were brought in contact with roughs of the worst type; but never in all our visits among these people, by night or by day, did we receive anything but the greatest respect. Our Irish friends were amusingly profuse in their thanks and blessings, such as, "Och, docktar darlint, may ivery hair of yere hedd be a candle to light ye to glory!"

In spite of want of sanitation, and of typhus and typhoid fevers, and other bad diseases of all kinds which we attended, not one of us suffered in the least, and, indeed, we were all very happy and very comfortable at dear old "39."

In Thomson himself we each felt that we had a sincere friend and wise counsellor—one who entered heartily and thoroughly into all our difficulties. What a boon this was to struggling students! Then, although he was considerably our senior in years, he was in spirit the most youthful of us all.

We had little time for general conversation except at meals, when "shop" was rigidly excluded. Thomson possessed, to an enviable degree, that essential quality of a good host—the faculty of keeping the ball of conversation rolling, while remaining himself

in the background. When he did talk, his conversation was most interesting, and now and again a bit of quiet "pawkie" humour, or a quaintly turned sentence would drop out, as if by accident, and set the table in a roar.

We saw a good deal of company, even in the Cowgate, of various kinds, and then there were the doctors, *and such doctors* :¹ men most of whom stood very high in the profession, and whose lives had been ripened and mellowed by Christian experience. To come in contact with such men, to witness their careful examinations, their kindly manner and gentle words to the poorest patient, to listen to their reasons for forming each diagnosis, and for prescribing such and such treatment, was in itself a most valuable education ; and we learned from them that, when so practised, the sacred profession of the healing art might become the right hand of the Church.

Friends interested in the Mission came to see and consult Thomson about it, and thus we enjoyed more than a mere passing glimpse of men of note and influence. On Friday evening the University Devotional Meeting was held, and it was looked upon as an "evening off," when we enjoyed seeing our student friends. Then there were the delightful "At Homes"

¹ Professor Miller, Dr. John Coldstream, Dr. A. Inglis, Dr. Warburton Begbie, Dr. Moir, Dr. Halliday Douglas, Dr. Benjamin Bell, Dr. Omond, Dr. P. Heron Watson, Dr. Scoresby Jackson, Dr. Grainger Stewart, etc., etc.

of the Honourable Mrs. Mackenzie in Moray Place, and the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society's Conversaziones in Dr. Coldstream's house, York Place. Altogether, life in the Cowgate for the students was far from dull. When I look back upon it, the marvel grows that we were able to have so much variety.

Hume, speaking of John Brown of Haddington, said, "He preached as if God Almighty was at his elbow." The same in truth might have been said of Thomson's prayers. Never did a man more fully carry out St. Paul's advice to the Philippians: "In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." We had some most wonderful answers to prayer! Here is one that deeply impressed me at the time, and has been a source of strength to my faith many times since.

The winter of 1860-61 was very severe, and the frost had been most intense and continuous for many weeks. There was great suffering in consequence amongst our poor. The moderately provident were able to keep the wolf from the door by selling everything they could possibly do without. Those who lived from hand to mouth, and many of the poor "old bodies," whose means of living always remained a mystery, were simply starving. Thomson set apart an evening to ask God for such things as he felt were needed. His prayer was of a most unconventional and business-like description. He told God how

many flannel shirts, and articles of clothing for men women, and children were needed, particularizing each article. He also named the medicines and medical comforts, as well as the amount of tea, sugar, etc., etc., required. All this he did in the most reverent and devout manner.

Next morning the letters arrived as usual, while we were having breakfast. The first one Thomson opened was from Mr. Findlay Anderson, stating that Mrs. Anderson had been feeling greatly for the poor people in the Cowgate, and asking him to accept two dozen flannel shirts to dispose of as he thought best. For the next few days letters and parcels poured in ; and I well remember on the following Saturday, when we counted up the gifts, it was found that the very articles had come in, but *in larger quantities than asked for*. What enjoyment I had in taking some of these comforts among the deserving cases in my district !

Another feature in our friend's character was the wonderful power he had of seizing passing events, and immediately using them in the Master's service. The following illustration out of many will best explain what I mean. At the Dispensary the patients assembled in a room, where a Lady read or talked to them until the doctor came. One day J. W. was among the patients. For years he had been known all over Scotland as one of the best street singers of our Scotch songs, and a great admirer of Burns. He interrupted the Lady by quoting a piece of poetry

and Dr. Thomson hearing voices as if in conversation, asked the Janitor what it meant. His reply was, "It's a man there answering back Miss —— by saying a piece o' Robbie Burns."

Presently Dr. Thomson, addressing the patients, remarked "that a great deal of the suffering of this world arose from the heartlessness of selfish people preying on their neighbours, leading them into temptation, and then glorying in their ruin"; and he added, "as the great Robbie Burns says,—

‘ Man’s inhumanity to man
Mak’s countless thousands mourn ’ ;

but," he went on, "cold, cruel, heartless, as all this is, there is something deeper and closer to man than his companions, be they either good or bad, for as Robbie Burns puts it,—

‘ The heart aye’s the part aye
That mak’s us richt or wrang ’ ” ;

and then our friend directed them to the Lord Jesus Christ. You can imagine J. W.’s astonishment as this flight of arrows from the quiver of his favourite poet was showered on him.

This was a period of my life upon which I look back with much pleasure and deep thankfulness. Many of the dear ones then associated with us have gone within the veil, but we look forward to a time when we shall all meet again. The separation may not be long—the re-union will be for Eternity.

LETTER FROM DR. JOHN HUTCHISON,
SIALKOT, N. INDIA, TO MRS. BURNS
THOMSON

MANY friends in many lands are praying for you, and many hearts are trying to help you to bear the burden of your great sorrow.

Your dear husband was not yours only. He belonged to all of us who, like himself, have found our way into the glorious service of Medical Missions. In his death we all suffer loss. His name has been so intimately connected with Medical Mission work from its very commencement, and his interest and sympathy have been so wide and so unflagging, that in all parts of the world there will be felt this sense of loss, even by those who have never seen his face nor clasped his hand. And what must it be to those of us who enjoyed the privilege of his friendship, and had a special place in that loving heart of his that never lost sight of a friend ! I look back over twenty-seven years to the time when, as a young inexperienced lad, I went to him first to offer myself for Medical Mission work. I know now how far short I

came of his ideal, and it only enhances the thought of his great kindness to me. I think I see him now in the little room upstairs in "dear old 39"—his sanctum, you remember—and I recall the very tone of his voice as he spoke to me of the privilege and honour of Medical Mission service, and then there was the prayer with which he dismissed me, the prayer of a man who lived very near to God. That interview made a very deep impression upon me, which time has not erased.

I thank God to-day that He gave me such a friend, and the intercourse of all these years has only deepened the esteem and love I entertained for him. We all loved him in those happy years in "39," so long ago. We could not help loving him, so true, and noble, and single-hearted in his relations to his great life-work. And what a work he was privileged to accomplish! We owe it to him that Medical Missions occupy the prominent place they do to-day in the work of every Missionary Society and Church. It would hardly be too much to say that it was from him the impulse went forth which, under God, resulted in the establishment of every Medical Mission in Great Britain. Those who are acquainted with the history of Medical Missions abroad know that for years he was the mainstay of the work in Nazareth, Madagascar, and other places; and of the many good men who were associated with the rise of modern Medical Missions, there is none whose name occupies so prominent a place, or is held

in such loving esteem and reverence, as that of your noble husband. Now he has gone to his rest and his reward, leaving an example which we may all do well to imitate.

coll.
7/4/75.
K.K.

